Sodalities for Nurses

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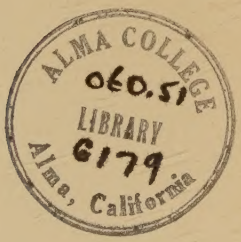
SODALITIES FOR NURSES

Sodalities for Nurses

A Series of Instructions On Their Nature, Their Organization, and The Methods of Conducting Their Chief Activities.

By

REV. EDWARD F. GARESCHÉ, S. J.



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To the Queen of the Sodality,
Our Advocate and Our Mother,
The Most Merciful, the Most Loving,
The Most Sweet Virgin Mary.

PREFACE

Sodalities for Nurses have come to be the accepted means of providing in an organized way, in our Catholic Schools of Nursing, for the spiritual training of the nurses, for a certain degree of student government, and for the systematizing of such charitable works as nurses can perform. Very many of these sodalities already exist, and they are being organized in increasing numbers in the places where hitherto they have not been established.

Holding up for the imitation of the nurses the perfect example of the Virgin Mother, and placing them under her special patronage, the sodality offers spiritual help and inspiration of a most precious kind. Yet it is not an easy task to make and keep the sodality worthy of its heavenly patroness.

All supernatural work, all truly religious organization is difficult, and the sodality is no exception to this rule. Societies which exist for the temporal benefit of their members are sustained by the self-interest of those members. The sodality does not work for time but for eternity, therefore it must make its members very fervent if they are to persevere.

It is to help those who have responsibility for the nurses' sodalities, chaplains of hospitals, the superiors, the officers of nurses' sodalities, the members thereof, that we have written these instructions. With the hope that they may aid to promote the honor of the Mother of God and the spiritual interests of our devoted nurses, we commend them to the nurse sodalists and their friends, and ask them to breathe a prayer for:

THE AUTHOR.

Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 1926.

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Sodalities for Nurses

Chapter I

WHAT IS THE SODALITY?

NOT a few ideas that are current about the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, which is being established for Catholic nurses everywhere throughout the United States and Canada, are less exact than one could wish. Positively wrong notions sometimes exist, and there is also a lack of right information. It is well worth while, therefore, to explain in some detail the nature and methods of this society.

It should be noted at the outset that the name sodality is unfortunately an ambiguous one. Dozens of other societies, some of them also dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, use this same title. A few of these, likewise, are head sodalities at Rome to which other sodalities are affiliated. These other sodalities are, of course, excellent societies, approved by the Church and carried on in honor of the Mother of God. But, to be definite and specific in these pages, we shall speak of the so-called Jesuit sodalities, which are

aggregated to the Jesuit "Prima Primaria" Sodality at Rome.

THE SODALITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

The society of which we speak, therefore, our Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, is distinguished by this, that it is "affiliated to the head Sodality of the Roman College." The first and the chief of these sodalities was established by a Jesuit professor, John Leunis, more than 350 years ago in his classroom in the Roman College. Little by little, sodalities multiplied in other parts of Europe. The popes, most of whom were themselves members of the sodality, enriched it with many indulgences and privileges and gave to the head sodality the power to affiliate to itself other similar societies throughout the world, and to communicate to them the special indulgences and spiritual favors which it had itself received.

For more than a century, only men and boys were admitted to the sodality, since it had been originally established for them, but finally, moved by the petitions of Catholic women throughout the world, the Holy Father threw open the doors of the sodality to every one who would strive to obey its rules and follow its ideals; so that now there exist sodalities for women as well as for men, for the young and the

old, for priests and laymen, for persons of various professions.

Some years ago, the late Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his own admission to the sodality while a student at school. On that occasion, the sodalists of Rome gathered to congratulate him and he addressed them and exhorted them to carry out the true principles of the holy society to which they belonged.

"I am informed," said the Holy Father, "that there are in the world 40,000 of these sodalities with some 7,000,000 members. What an anchor of salvation these would be to the world, did all the sodalists live up to the holy ideals proposed to them." The Sovereign Pontiff then exhorted all good Catholics to enter this holy society and be faithful to its traditions. He pointed out that the sodality is for every class and age and for both sexes. But those who enter it must live up to its rules and practices, and not be content merely with putting their names on the list. They should come faithfully to meetings every week and to the monthly Communion, and should besides take up some active work in honor of the Blessed Virgin for their neighbor and the Church.

"No one is worthy of the name of Sodalist,"

said the Pope, "unless, in addition to faithful attendance at the meetings, he practices some active work of zeal in honor of the Queen of Heaven." To teach catechism, to visit and help the sick, to spread Catholic literature, to encourage frequent Communion, to help the poor, to save neglected children, to promote Catholic sociability for the young, these are some of the favorite activities of well organized and fervent sodalities, and they may be chosen according to the preferences and capabilities of the sodalists.

SPECIAL SODALITIES

It is a special feature of this method of organization, as traditionally practiced in the Church, to establish special sodalities for particular classes of persons. Thus, in Europe there exist sodalities for priests, for physicians, for medical students, for students of law and of literature, for business men, for working men and women, for various classes and divisions of people. The advantage of this form of organization is that, while associating all in honor of the Blessed Virgin, the sodality for each class can be so conducted as to suit the special circumstances and needs of its members. Thus, the sodality for physicians can adapt its meetings and instructions to their spiritual needs; so can the

sodality for priests, for lawyers, for teachers. In like manner, sodalities for nurses should be organized in a way to supply the exact needs of those who follow this profession.

From these remarks it will be plain what answer ought to be given to those nurses who raise the objection that they do not care to join a nurses' sodality, because they are already members of sodalities in their own parish or in the school where they were educated. The reply is that if their former sodality was duly affiliated to the head sodality at the Roman College, then "once a sodalist, always a sodalist," and they are still members. But being nurses they should now enter the nurses' branch of this sodality. Besides, within a year of the time when they come to live in a new place, they are bound to enter the sodality there if one exists, under pain of losing the privileges and indulgences. Thus, in any case, they should enter the nurses' sodality.

If, however, the school or parish sodalities to which they belong, were not affiliated to the head Sodality of the Roman College, then the nurses' sodality is an entirely different organization, and hence they should enter it in order to procure sodality indulgences and privileges. In either supposition, therefore, those who wish

to enjoy the benefits of the sodality should enter the one established for the particular profession to which they belong.

PURPOSE OF THE SODALITY

The purpose of the affiliated sodality is expressed in the rules of 1910, which were carefully prepared and approved by the Father General of the Society of Jesus, who has received authority from the Pope to affiliate other sodalities to that of the Roman College. These rules are usually adopted by each sodality when it is affiliated and they express the traditional ideals and spirit of the head sodality at Rome and its aggregated societies.

The first rule declares that the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin is a religious body, approved by the Holy See, whose purpose it is to excite in its members an ardent devotion, reverence, and filial love for the Blessed Mother of God. Through this devotion, and with the help of so good a Mother, it seeks to make its members good Catholics, sincerely bent on sanctifying themselves, each in his own state of life, and earnestly desirous to save and sanctify their neighbor and to defend the Church of Christ against the attacks of its enemies.

This expresses very well the spirit and idea

of the sodality. It is a religious body, that is to say, it has its own purpose and traditions which are expressed in the rules and should be lived up to in order that it may be worthy of its name. A society which neglects these rules and still calls itself an affiliated society is in a position similar to that of a religious community which disregards its rules and still calls itself by the name of its institute. It has the name, but little more.

The chief devotion of the sodality, as the rule further indicates, is to the Blessed Mother of God, a devotion which appeals to every Catholic but should be especially dear to Catholic nurses who can find in the virtues of the Blessed Mother, a perfect model of Christian charity in their work, and a guide to the imitation of Her Divine Son; for no one ever copied Christ so perfectly as did she. This devotion should be ardent and filial, such as a devoted daughter gives a loving mother. The sodalists should be eager to work in honor of their Mother Mary and to show their love for her by the fervor of their Catholic life. The greater the reverence, devotion, and filial love they have for Mary, the more they will fulfill the purpose of the sodality.

The singular devotion to God's Mother, so excellent in itself, is also a means to an end.

Through this devotion and with her help, the sodalists are to be made excellent Catholics, eager to become holy themselves and to make others holy. They are to work actively, according to their opportunities, for their personal sanctification, for the help of their neighbor, and for the defense and spread of the faith. Thus, the sodality is a training school for the whole lay apostolate. It offers a means of supplying the Catholic element in education and if it is particularly difficult to keep up a good sodality, one reason is that the work goes counter to fallen human nature and to the bad tendencies of the times. It is so difficult because it is so necessary.

To sum up, then, in brief, the purpose of the affiliated sodalities is to use a great and filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin as a means of cultivating in the sodalists such a fervent interior spirit of the Catholic life, as will tend of its own nature to overflow in good works. Once the inward spirit of the sodalist is sufficiently developed, it will be easy to introduce exterior activities. The effort should be from within, outward. Not to urge and worry the sodalists into coming to meetings and joining the sections should be the objective, but rather they should be first

made fervent and willing, and then they will be ready of their own accord to take up the work.

Applying what has been said to our Catholic nurses, it should be clear how fully the sodality meets their needs, if only it is perseveringly organized and kept up in the spirit of the rules. Both their social and religious needs can be met through sections or committees. Their Catholic instruction can be completed, their professional ambition aroused, their talents trained, their social qualities developed, through different sections or committees of the sodality. Meanwhile they gain the precious indulgences and privileges granted to sodalists; they share in the prayers and good works offered up by 7,000,000 members throughout the world; they can affiliate themselves, wherever they go to live, with a sodality in that place; their lives and deaths will be put once and for all under the patronage of her of whom it is said that no one who ever asked her help, implored her aid, or sought her mediation has been left desolate.

Chapter II

ESTABLISHING A SODALITY

PRACTICALLY, the process of establishing a sodality is very simple. Write to the nearest Jesuit Provincial, and ask him to send a blank and instructions for affiliation. He will then forward these and the blank should be filled in with great care according to instructions, and signed by the person applying for affiliation, usually the chaplain of the hospital.

Application Blank

On the blank containing a space for the "class of persons" should be written, "nurses." Next comes another space for the title of the Blessed Virgin, and in this is written the feast or title of the Holy Mother, under which she is chosen as the chief patroness of the sodality. A favorite title is the Immaculate Conception. Our Lady, Help of the Sick, Consoler of the Afflicted, or a similar title would also be appropriate for a hospital sodality.

Then follows a space for the name of the secondary patron, a saint chosen as a model for the sodalists and towards whom they are to have

special devotion. St. John of God and St. Camillus de Lellis were nurses. St. Luke was a physician according to tradition. So were Sts. Cosmas and Damian. Sometimes local devotion will determine the choice of another patron.

The next thing to be determined, after filling in on the blank the name of the hospital, locality, etc., is the name of the director, who must be a priest. The chaplain is usually designated and it should be noted that his essential duties are few. He must receive the candidates or delegate some one else to do so, but this can be done informally. All that is required is that the sodalist request the director to admit her, and that he give some sign of his assent. Solemn and public receptions once or several times a year are much to be recommended but are not necessary.

Besides the director we strongly advise the appointment in every hospital of a sub-director, a sister who will take care of all the details which the director himself cannot attend to. She may seek guidance of the director and find out from him how much he will be able to do, but the sodality should not depend too much on any individual and should be ready and able to conduct its meetings and carry on its activities even

though the director is unavoidably prevented from giving it aid.

If the blank is filled out to read "chaplain of the hospital and his successors," then the bishop in signing the blank appoints the successors also as directors, and they become authorized to receive members by the fact of their appointment as chaplain or pastor. Otherwise, it would seem that a new appointment should be made by the bishop each time the former director departs. As this would be inconvenient it is advisable to have some such provision for a successor.

A sodality is erected in a church or chapel, though it is not necessary to hold all the meetings there.

The blanks contain also a request that the rules of 1910 be approved for the sodality. If any changes are asked for in the rules, or if any other rules are wanted, they should be included with the petition. The rules of 1910 give the spirit and ideals which affiliated sodalities should have. Hence, no changes are ordinarily needed. These rules do not bind, of course, under pain of sin but they should be studied and observed as far as circumstances will allow.

This blank then, duly filled out and signed, should be sent to the bishop with a request that he affix his own signature thereto. When he

returns it, this "placet" as it is called, should be sent to the provincial from whom it came, and he will then apply for permission from Rome to issue a diploma. When this diploma is granted, the affiliated sodality begins to enjoy the privileges and indulgences of the head sodality of Rome. It sometimes takes several months for the letter to reach Rome and for the reply to be received. In the meantime, however, the sodality may be organized and may begin its work.

AFFILIATION

The founding of the sodality, that is the calling of the sodality into being, is thus effected by the authority of the bishop when he gives his consent by signing the "placet." After it has been thus brought into being, the sodality is affiliated with the Head Sodality of the Roman College by the authority of the General of the Society of Jesus. Both these proceedings are essential to the gaining of indulgences. Only a sodality which has been duly erected or established can be affiliated, and only the members of a sodality which has been duly affiliated can gain the indulgences.

The diploma which is sent to each affiliated sodality is a long document in Latin, one sheet of which contains the formal evidence of affiliation,

and the other the list of indulgences and privileges which this affiliation confers. Immediately on receiving this diploma, it is well to have it framed in glass and hung up in some prominent place, as it often happens that years afterward a doubt arises whether affiliation was obtained and the diploma cannot be found as proof. The best proof of affiliation is a diploma. Where there is doubt as to valid affiliation, it is best to make application for a new diploma.

There is no charge for the procedure of affiliation but a small remittance may be sent to cover incidental expenses of postage, secretarial work, etc. The head sodality at Rome merely communicates its privileges and indulgences by affiliation. It does not assume control over the affiliated sodality nor send it any direct communication except the diploma. Each sodality remains entirely in the hands of the bishop, who is responsible for its existence, and of the director whom he appoints to take care of it. Each affiliated society is expected to try to carry out the ideals as formulated in the rules.

SODALITY RULES

All these rules are not of equal importance. Some of them deal with subjects which concern the very essence of the sodality, others are direc-

tive and suggestive. But all should be read and considered by the director, the sub-directress, and the officers.

Several books which have been issued by the present writer to explain the rules, may be had of any Catholic book seller. "Sodality Conferences," second series, explains those rules of the sodality which have specially to do with the personal sanctification of members. "Social Organization in Parishes" tells of methods of organization among sodalities in general and of the many good works which have been found practical from time to time. It includes several chapters on nurses' sodalities in particular. "Sodality Conferences" also contains chapters on the rules explaining especially those rules which have to do with the management and conduct of the sodality. "A Vade Mecum for Nurses and Social Workers" has several chapters on nurses' sodalities. Finally, "The Sodality Manual" gives much material of use to nurses' sodalities.

Before beginning a sodality, the one who is to be the organizer, whether priest or sister, will do well to read carefully the literature on the subject, so as to have definite and practical ideas about what is to be done. Incorrect notions about the sodality have caused many failures. If we do not know precisely whither we are going,

it is no wonder we do not find the way. This preliminary study will be amply repaid by the good results secured. Where there has hitherto been comparative failure with the sodality for nurses, those in charge may find it useful to consider whether sufficient information is had about methods and ideas. The material available in the books just mentioned is not the result of any one person's experience, but comes from observations and from intercourse with many who have had some part in the management of sodalities.

FIRST RECEPTION

When the time comes for holding the first reception and beginning the meetings, care should be taken to make a right start. The sodalists should realize from the first that they are not joining a mere pious confraternity, but are enlisting in a real crusade of activity as well as devotion and prayer, a life-long service of the Mother of God. For this reason it is sometimes well to ask those who are not resolved to be faithful sodalists to withdraw their names before the reception, and when some do this, it should be taken as a good sign. It is not necessary that all Catholic nurses be sodality members. It is much better to have a very fervent, though smaller group in the sodality, than to have many

members but little fervor—a series of names on a list, and nothing more.

One of the first steps at the meeting is to teach the sodalists how to say the office of the Blessed Virgin, allowing the officers to recite the versicles and the members to make the responses. The office should be said with attention, not in a sing-song voice, but with expression. The first part of the hymns may be said by the officers and the second part by the members. The prefect says, "Let us pray," and all recite the prayers together. It is of course not necessary to say this office.

The organization of the sections may be undertaken one at a time as the opportunity offers. Begin with those which seem to appeal most to the nurses and can be most readily and successfully organized, giving preference to the activities that appear most necessary and fruitful under the circumstances. Sections for frequent Communion, for good reading, and for the help of the missions are particularly practical. With patience and perseverance a good sodality may be built up even under the difficult circumstances of hospital life with its many demands on time and energy.

Chapter III

THE SISTER DIRECTRESS OF THE SODALITY

A PRIEST must be the lawfully appointed director of the sodality in order that the sodalists may be duly received, and he, as director, has authority over the sodality. Still it often happens that in a hospital, it is practically impossible, for one reason or another, to secure the services of a priest to take active charge and to continue that regular direction of the sodality which is necessary for any considerable success.

Through the exigencies of dioceses and because of the scarcity of priests, the chaplains in hospitals are too often only temporary officials who are moved and changed so frequently, that they find it impossible to devote themselves to the building up of the sodality. Sometimes, again, they are unwell or otherwise incapacitated for taking on the active direction of sodality work.

In such instances what is to be done? Does the fact that no priest is available for active director, prevent the effective organization of

the sodality? Or should those in charge of the hospital look about for some other practical means of making the sodality a success in spite of this handicap? And where may such a means be found?

The solution of this difficulty is to be sought in the appointment of some capable sister to act as assistant directress of the sodality and to do for it whatever the director, for any reason, cannot attend to. The only functions of the director which the sister cannot supply are the admission of members, and the appointment of officers where these are appointed and not elected. In almost every other respect she can accomplish, at least to some degree, the work of the director. Even the reception of members gives no practical difficulty, as all that is required is an application on the part of the candidates and some sign from the director of his intention to receive them. So too, the sister sub-directress may ask and obtain the approval of the director to the list of officers presented to him.

For the rest, the sister can call a meeting, give the instruction, direct the work, preside at elections, instruct the officers in their duties, in a word, do anything necessary for the progress of the sodality. She may consult with the direc-

tor from time to time, as he wishes, obtain his approval for the appointment of officers, and keep in touch with him as far as he desires or circumstances allow. Conditions differ and so do persons. Thus the exact limits of the sister's activities and responsibilities will be determined by local contingencies. Enough to say in general that she can supply for the functions of the director except as regards the reception of members and the appointment of officers.

SELECTION OF DIRECTRESS

It is a question whether the sister thus put in charge of the sodality should be the superintendent of nurses or some other sister. Sometimes the superintendent of nurses is so specifically qualified for this work and interested in it that she is the providential person to take it up. At other times the relations between the nurses and superintendent, or her other occupations with their demands on time and energy, or some personal reasons, might indicate that it would be better to appoint some one else. In any case the choice should be made because of personal fitness, interest, and capacity, and not on account of office or position.

Neither should the one chosen be discouraged over the difficulty of her work or the respon-

sibility put upon her. After all, in some respects a sister is best qualified to do this work for nurses. She can come into more intimate contact and understanding with them than the director, and if she finds difficulty in some of the work at first, she will see it grow easier as times goes on and will find experience a great teacher in sodality direction.

The sister appointed should make a real study of the sodality in general and of the special features of a nurses' sodality. She should read the books before indicated: the Sodality Manual, Social Organization in Parishes, Sodality Conferences, both first and second series, A Vade Mecum for Nurses and Social Workers, etc., and should take notes of the features which seem to her most practical for her own sodality. She should ask questions about points that are obscure to her, by correspondence with the Editor of "Hospital Progress," or through some other sources of information, and should try to form for herself a correct idea of what is expected of the sodality for nurses so that she may know clearly at what she is aiming.

In regard to the instructions at meetings, if the sister directress is herself well informed about the sodality, she will not find much difficulty about speaking to the sodalists. Her

remarks ought to be definite and practical, and should be directed to giving the nurses a true notion of the sodality spirit and aims, and a real zeal for becoming good sodalists. If this is done, the instructions will be profitable. Eloquence is not necessary; only a clear, interesting way of putting things.

The sister directress ought to look on herself in the light of one who has been given charge of a new class in the training school on a very important subject, concerning which the teacher herself should be well informed and should impart sound, clear doctrine to her pupils. The sodality is the subject of study. Therefore, the sister directress should prepare for the meetings as she would for a weekly class, making each one of her instructions bear on a definite point which she has previously prepared. She will find opportunity to explain many things useful and even necessary for Catholic nurses to know, and to put them in an appealing and concrete way, using devotion to the Blessed Virgin as a means to stir up in her hearers that fervor of inward Catholic life which will tend of its own efficacy to overflow in good works.

She should look on herself not as a preacher but as a teacher, not as one who is appointed to give exhortations or merely devotional talks

about the Blessed Mother, but as an instructor who is to explain to the nurses the definite purpose of the sodality, the life which sodalists ought to lead, the principles by which they should be guided, and the good works which they should undertake in honor of the Blessed Virgin. The life of the nurse, both pupil and graduate, should always be before her eyes, and knowing as she will the limitations and opportunities, the preoccupations and weariness, the temptations and difficulties of such a life, she should carefully fortify her sodalists against the trials to come, and instruct them in the higher requirements of their Catholic faith so as to fit them to be lifelong servants and worthy children of their Holy Mother.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

From time to time the sister directress, who has to care for the whole conduct of the sodality, may introduce into the meetings, readings from selected books in place of her own instructions. This may be done at any time when it would be very inconvenient for the sister herself to appear. Good readers ought to be chosen and trained for this work, and they should look beforehand over the pages to be read, so as to give them with interest and clearness. Some-

times, it may be practicable to have one of the graduate nurses give a brief instruction, or to have the pupil nurses deliver brief talks to their fellow-sodalists. In all this, it is supposed that the meetings occur in the classroom or in some other place where the nurses may fittingly speak to the sodality.

Material to be used for sodality readings may be found in abundance in the books previously mentioned and in others of a similar character. This material will suffice for weekly meetings for some years. As time goes on the sister directress will accumulate matter for reading, and she should be retained in her office as long as she succeeds. She should not be changed without reason.

Few activities in a hospital will be found more important than this which has to do so directly with the spiritual and Catholic training of the nurses. The sister directress should keep it in mind to cultivate always the initiative and personal activity of the sodalists and to get them to do as much as possible, never taking on herself the activities which she can accomplish through others.

Even where the director finds himself able fully to attend to his share of the sodality directions, it is very advisable to have one of the

sisters act as a sub-directress. She can accomplish many things which the director himself could hardly manage and can be of very great help to him in making the sodality more and more of a success. If the director should fall ill or be removed, she can keep up the work. Where a great deal of cooperation exists between the director and the sister appointed to take care of the interests of the sodality, the best results may be looked for. But in proportion, as the director finds himself unable to accomplish all his work, the sister can effectively help him with the sodality.

Since the sodality is a living society and should have a life of its own, we may compare it to those organisms which adapt themselves to their environment. When one set of circumstances surrounds the living thing, it reacts accordingly and maintains its existence by aligning itself with conditions as they are. Where the conditions change, so does the reaction. We can tell whether a thing is alive and in good health by its capacity to adapt itself to circumstances. So it should be with the sodality. There must be a power of resistance and adaptation. In favorable and unfavorable surroundings, it must be able to live and maintain itself.

The effort of the sister directress should be,

therefore, to make the sodality really alive, to enable it to sustain itself in the sometimes hard and trying circumstances of hospital existence. To do this, she should understand and promote its true ideals, secure the observance of the spirit of the rules, get the members to develop a real interior fervor which will overflow in good deeds, and train competent officers so as to work with and through them and not endeavor to do everything herself. This means effort and perseverance but it is a work most fruitful for the sanctification of souls and most dear to the Heart of Christ and to that of His Most Blessed Mother.

Chapter IV

MEETINGS OF THE NURSES' SODALITIES

THE common rules for the sodalities affiliated to the Head Sodality of the Roman College provides that "the meetings of the sodality shall be held at least once a week." Thus the ideal is weekly meetings according to the rules. These rules have been established by the authority of the Father General of the Society of Jesus, and after consultation with the experienced directors of sodalities in many lands. Hence, the standard is fixed. The minimum requirement for a first-class sodality is to have weekly meetings. Where it is impossible to do this because of untoward circumstances, no one is to blame, of course.

The fact that it is impracticable, because of some special reason, to hold weekly meetings, should not discourage those in charge of the sodality. They should do their best in every other way and hope for the time when some change in circumstances will make weekly meetings practicable. The fact remains, however, that weekly meetings have been fixed as the ideal to be aimed at, and hence, it is proper to require

them in order that the sodality shall be considered first class in every way.

There is no doubt that at first, until the habit of regular attendance has been formed, it is hard even for the pupil nurses to come to weekly meetings. Their time is precious to them and many other things come up just at the moment when they have to go to sodality meeting. But where a nurse without excuse deliberately stays away from the sodality, she shows that she is not sufficiently interested to pay this honor to the Blessed Virgin. Her absence tends to dishearten every one connected with the sodality, the director, the sister in charge and the officers, as well as the members themselves who are encouraged to attend by the good example of others and discouraged in their own fervor by those who absent themselves frequently without reason. Where a nurse sodalist is accustomed deliberately to stay away from many meetings without reasonable excuse, the officers should either see that she comes or drop her from the roll of membership. Of course the member who is dropped for good reason loses the indulgences.

From the pupil nurses, attendance is expected. If they make too frequent excuses, the officers should look into the matter. But if the graduate nurses give excuses and are absent, much

more leniency should be used because they are naturally obliged by the character of their work to absent themselves from meetings. In the case of graduate nurses who are working outside the hospital, a general excuse can be entered for good reason and they may be considered excused as long as they are out of the city or engaged in a case which requires their constant attention.

FILIAL AFFECTION

It is well to make much of faithful attendance at meetings from the very beginning. Carelessness in this regard ruins the life of the sodality. Though the meeting is not everything, still it is the public, organized assembly of the sodalists and their general way of showing their devotion and fidelity to the service of the Mother of God. They should be taught from the start that the mere fact of their faithfulness in being present at meetings is in itself no light honor to the Queen of the sodality. Where a dutiful son or daughter lives in the same city with a well-loved mother, to drop in to see her faithfully once every week is no small consolation to her affectionate heart. The attendance of the sodalists at the sodality meeting is like a weekly visit paid to the Mother of God, to assure her of our constant loyalty and to comfort her heart by the

small sacrifice required in giving up other occupations to assemble in her honor.

The child who visits his mother every week to speak a word of affection to her, to look into her well-loved face, and assure her again of his constant filial remembrance and devotion, does not expect each time to be entertained and amused, or to receive from his mother some special present or a token of appreciation. He comes because he is a loving son and she a loving mother, because he likes to express and make known his affection for her, and he realizes that she likes to have him come. In the same spirit the sodalist ought to make much of her weekly visit to the sodality meetings where she pays a personal token of affection and appreciation to the Blessed Mother, and where the Blessed Mother loves to see her kneeling among the other members of her family of the sodality.

We remember one family group in which the affection of the children for their mother and of her for them was so warm and active, that all the members of the family, sons and daughters, wrote every day to their mother a letter of greeting and affection, and she in turn wrote to each one of her children every day when they were absent from her. Even when the children had grown up and were married, they continued

this practice and thought it no burden to give faithfully every day the half hour or so required to keep up this constant communication with their mother.

If natural affection can produce such results, surely the members of the sodality who have chosen the Blessed Virgin as their queen, their advocate, and their mother, and have promised to show her a constant and filial devotion, can manage somehow, when they have no good reason for remaining away, to come to the sodality meeting. The fact that this regular attendance at meetings is especially hard for nurses, will add to their merits and to the appreciation and reward they will receive from their heavenly mother.

There are 336 half hours in a week. Surely it is not too much to ask that the sodalists give one three-hundred-and-thirty-sixth part of their time each week to honor her who watches and protects them every hour of all the livelong year.

PROGRAM OF THE MEETINGS

In their program the nurses' sodalities will, of course, follow the regular outline of sodality meetings given in the rules. They will begin with the hymn to the Holy Ghost and this may well be sung by all the sodalists in common.

It is a good idea to organize a sodality choir to lead in the singing, but at the same time to encourage all the sodalists to join in. The sodality choir, besides taking part in the exercises of the meetings, can also give special programs, sing at the retreats and the sodality feasts, and enliven the social meetings by cheerful songs. But the singing at the regular meetings should be especially well done and should give as much pleasure and devotion as possible.

Then follows the roll call, where this is customary, conducted by the secretary unless some other method of recording attendance, e. g., by cards, is used. The secretary should always make it a point of duty to get accurately the record of those present and absent, and to note this in a permanent book, which at the end of the year will show clearly the average of attendance both for individuals and for the whole sodality. This is very important.

Next follows the instruction to the sodalists. This is usually given by the director. Often, however, because of hospital conditions, it is impossible for the director to be present. In this case either the sister in charge should give the instruction or it must be read from a book. Either of these latter methods will suffice, but in any event at least a good instructive reading

of ten minutes or so should be given by a sodalist, who is a thoroughly good reader and who can put life into the selection and deliver it in a pleasing manner. For this purpose, regular readers ought to be appointed and given some training so that one will always be ready to read. The book should be carefully chosen and, for a time at least, should be such as gives some definite instruction about the sodality, its purpose and ideals, with a particular view to the needs of the nurses. "Sodality Conferences," both first and second series, have been prepared for this special purpose and will afford material for many readings.

After the reading, when the sodality meeting is held in a place where the Blessed Sacrament is not reserved, there may be a brief discussion of the passage read, with questions or comments on it, so that those who have difficulties can propose them. The use of a question-box into which questions may be dropped at any time to be answered at the meetings by the sister superintendent, the director, or one of the officers, is also an interesting feature of the meeting.

Next comes the recital of the office. This should be arranged according to the devotion of the sodalists. Many sodalities use for the purpose, the little office of the Immaculate Concep-

tion, and this sometimes gives much satisfaction. The rules do not prescribe this little office of the Immaculate Conception ordinarily used. They simply say that the little office of the Blessed Virgin shall be said, or some other office. The little office referred to is that contained in the Roman breviary which consists of psalms and antiphons, not of hymns and prayers as does the little office of the Immaculate Conception.

Where no office appeals to the sodalists, some prayers in honor of the Blessed Virgin may be recited instead. In any event, it is well to introduce variety from time to time by changing the devotions to the Blessed Virgin. This helps to revive the attention and interest of the sodalists, which tend to become dulled by recitation of the self-same form of words at every meeting. Many such prayers may be found in "The Sodality Manual" by the present writer.

THE SOCIAL ASPECT

After the office or other prayers in honor of the Blessed Virgin, a business meeting may be held in the same place, provided the assembly place of the sodality is not in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Even when the religious exercises are held in the chapel, it is well to have the sodalists go to the classroom afterwards for a short business and social meeting. At this

meeting, the minutes of the preceding meeting should be read, brief reports should be given by the secretaries of the sections, the unfinished business taken up and discussed and voted on if necessary, and new business proposed either by officers or members. In this way, the sodalists are trained to take an actual part in the work and it becomes more interesting for them.

The whole proceedings described need not take more than half an hour. The hymn and roll call will consume about three or four minutes, the recital of the office about seven minutes, the instruction or reading from an appropriate book about ten minutes, leaving nine or ten minutes for the business meeting. If everything is done briskly and promptly, no time will be lost. Even the office should be said alertly, not droned out or dawdled over, but with devout alacrity.

Where a special occasion arises, these exercises may be changed or omitted, but the instruction or reading should always be retained when possible, because it is so important a part of the training of the sodalist. Insistence should be laid on the practical and interesting quality of this instruction or reading.

It is not enough to speak in general terms as is so often done of devotion to the Blessed Vir-

gin, or to tell the sodalists in a vague way to be faithful children of their mother in heaven. The definite purpose of the sodality, its rules, traditions, approved activities and methods, should be dwelt upon and explained. The nurse sodalists should be well instructed as to the special spirit and aims of the society which they have joined, and a good deal of repetition and development will be necessary before they thoroughly understand the sodality.

Many nurses, before entering the training school, have belonged to so-called sodalities which were mere devotional confraternities, with only monthly meetings and communion and no organized activities, with no characteristic spirit of service or friendliness, and with no reason for existence, except the promotion of certain exercises of piety. Such societies are well enough as far as they go but they are very different from the affiliated sodalities of which we speak. This difference ought to be explained, and the true nature of the affiliated sodalities should be emphasized and made clear in the instructions and readings of the sodality meeting.

From time to time, special meetings of the sodality should be held with a special program to commemorate some sodality anniversary or to celebrate some particular feast. The great feasts

of the Blessed Virgin, the feasts of Christmas, of Easter, and similar great festivals, offer an occasion for a special program. At these meetings, there should be a program carried out by the sodalists themselves, with singing, recitations, a religious playlet, such as can be had readily for such an occasion or composed by the nurses themselves, a selection of songs by the sodality choir, and similar pleasant features, followed where possible by a social meeting with light refreshments, etc.

While the religious element is always kept prominent, a social aspect should also be given to the sodality gathering. It might be a good idea from time to time to have the religious meetings followed by a surprise party in the way of a light refreshment, served informally and unexpectedly. In this way, the sodalists may have the pleasant anticipation of not knowing when these little rewards will be given them.

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

Another plan for encouraging faithful attendance from the human side is the giving occasionally of a door prize. This is managed in the following way. Each sodalist on entering takes a card bearing her name, kept in alphabetical order in a rack near the door, and drops it in a

basket as a sign of attendance. At the end of the meeting a name is drawn by lot from the basket, and the sodalist whose card is thus chosen receives as a prize a small book or other pious article. These gifts may be bought from the sodality fund and will not be expensive. The practice gives the sodalists a sense of pleasant anticipation that they may receive a gift, and there is much interest to find out who will be the fortunate one at each meeting.

Another method which has proven interesting is to secure from time to time a number of inexpensive holy pictures and to give one to each member who is present. No one should receive a picture unless she is actually present, even those who have given a good excuse being excluded from participation in this gift.

To sum up, much should be made, from the very beginning, of prompt and faithful attendance at sodality meetings. The meetings should be as interesting as possible, and should be well prepared beforehand. They should be varied, so as constantly to keep up the interest of those who attend. At the same time, all the sodalists should be trained to come to the meeting as a matter of personal fidelity and devotion to the

Blessed Virgin, considering it a weekly visit which they pay like loving children to their Holy Mother. When this spirit is well inculcated, faithfulness in attendance will become habitual.

Chapter V

THE NURSES' SODALITY AND SOCIABILITY

HE word "sodality" comes from the Latin word "sodalis," which signifies a companion, a close friend, a member of a brotherhood or sisterhood. Sodalists all may be said to belong to the special family circle of the Holy Mother of God, because they attach themselves to her service more closely than others. The term "sodalist" ought, therefore, to carry with it the signification of brotherly or sisterly loyalty and affection. Those who bear such a title should surely distinguish themselves by their charity toward one another.

This spirit of cordial kindness and sociability must specially characterize the sodality for nurses. Members are called upon to exercise toward one another a particular charity which shows itself in pleasant cordiality when they meet, in the spirit of cooperation and friendly help, and in an evident desire to promote sociability in every practical way. Where this spirit does not exist, devotion to the Blessed Virgin lacks one of its particular charms, the

evident charity and kindness which imitation of so good and kind a mother inspires.

Sodalists ought, therefore, to be particularly agreeable and friendly toward each other. They should make advances toward establishing a real spirit of mutual goodwill and helpfulness in the sodality. Anything like cliques or little circles of friends bound together by an alliance, offensive and defensive, against the rest of the sodality, is dreadfully out of place. In the sodalities for nurses especially, this spirit of general charity ought to be most manifest.

Because of the nature of their occupation, nurses are likely to drift into a habit of living apart and disregarding the interests of the fellow workers in their profession. This isolation is harmful to others who need their encouragement and support, but it also hurts the nurses themselves, who become solitary beings, like unblessed hermits, lonely and apart. If the sodality is everything it should be, it can supply in a large measure the bond of friendliness.

After the regular meetings a few moments, at least, should be given to a social meeting in which the nurses can chat with one another and renew acquaintance. The prefect or president of the sodality should make it a point to introduce to one another those who are unacquainted.

When the member of a nurses' sodality of another city comes and presents a card of membership, she should be received with special and evident courtesy and kindness and should be made to feel welcome and at home. If the prefect cannot attend to this herself at any meeting, she should delegate some one else to do it.

CHARITY AT HOME AND ELSEWHERE

While not overlooking the claims of charitable work for the benefit of others than sodalists, the members should recollect that charity begins at home and that their spirit of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, their interior fervor for her service, should manifest itself, first of all, in the kindness and helpfulness which they show to their fellow sodalists. One of the greatest services they can render to the sodality is to help to create in it such a real atmosphere of kindness and sociability, that it may be a privilege to join so friendly an organization. This will help powerfully to keep the old members faithful and make them appreciate their affiliation.

This spirit of friendliness will also be a great inducement to others to apply for admission. Every one likes the right sort of sociability. Once, before a rather large gathering of nurses,

we dwelt upon this feature of sodality work and spoke of the number of nurses who travel and who come to a strange city, perhaps, in care of a patient, but without any friends or acquaintances in their new place of residence. They are very lonely. They do not know where to apply for companionship which is safe and congenial.

However, we continued, if they bring with them their membership card in the nurses' sodality and find a cordial welcome awaiting them in a local sodality for nurses, their problem is solved. From the first time they attend the meetings and are introduced to the members, their loneliness is at an end and they have a sufficiency of congenial friends.

When we had finished speaking a nurse arose to make some comments.

"What you have said, Father," she exclaimed, "is certainly borne out by my experience. Some years ago, I arrived in this city, a stranger. I was a graduate nurse and easily secured employment; but I was dreadfully lonely. I had not a friend in the whole city, and did not know where to go to make friends. Then, at the acme of my loneliness, one of my co-workers in the hospital asked me whether I was a Catholic. I replied in the affirmative. She invited me to go with her that evening to a meeting of the local sodality

for nurses. I did so. A few moments after the meeting was over, I was introduced to one after another of a whole group of congenial Catholic nurses. From that day to this, I have not felt for a moment any lack of friendliness or sociability. The sodality solved that problem for me."

Many other graduate nurses who have traveled with patients, or, who have gone from place to place in search of more congenial surroundings, could relate similar experiences of loneliness and want of resources for sociability. They do not know where to turn to find friends. A membership card in a sodality should be their "Open Sesame" to a true Catholic friendliness. Wherever they go, they should find ready for them a well-organized group of their fellow nurses, ready to receive them into the local branch of the sodality of which they were members in their former place of residence.

THE NURSE IN NEW ENVIRONMENT

The need for this is the greater just at present, because so many Catholic nurses travel about to such distances, seeking change of environment or impelled by the wish to gain new experience. In the hospitals of the West, you will find nurses from the East and from the cen-

tral states. In the East, nurses sometimes foregather from the far West or the South. Every graduate nurse who travels and who is a sodalist should take with her a membership card, duly signed. It is easy to find the whereabouts of the nurses' sodalities by inquiring at Catholic hospitals.

In accord with this spirit of friendliness and sociability, members of the sodality should organize little entertainments and social meetings when the routine of the hospital will allow, and the officers of the sodality should be on the lookout from time to time for means of bringing the sodalists together for social entertainment.

The sodality may also organize social events to which the friends of the sodalists may be invited. They may promote entertainments for the convalescent patients. By corresponding with or visiting the local parish sodalities, they can obtain the assistance of outside talent for their reunions, to furnish music, dramatic presentations, etc. This cooperation between the nurses' sodality and parish and school sodalities is much to be recommended and it will be of mutual benefit. For the school of nursing, the publicity thus obtained will be useful. Students will be drawn to the school if they come in con-

tact with the nurse sodalists and find them friendly and congenial and their work interesting.

CITY GROUPS

Besides the sodalities which exist in so many hospitals, it has sometimes been found practicable to establish city-wide sodalities for graduate nurses. Thus, shortly before the entrance of the United States into the war, we were invited by a group of graduate nurses to come to their city and address a meeting for the purpose of helping them to organize a sodality. It was a very interesting and significant occasion. Through the activities of one of the fervent Catholic nurses, a number had assembled.

One of our first tasks was to introduce them all to each other. They were for the most part strangers, though many of them had lived long in the same city. We had to inquire their names and make them acquainted. In some cases, where they were already friends, neither knew that the other was a Catholic. "I am so surprised," said one, coming up to me. "Here is Miss So-and-So, with whom I have worked in the same hospital for a year, and neither of us knew all that time that the other was a Catholic. The first time

we learned of it was when each, to her surprise, saw the other here this evening."

This sodality was well established and promised to flourish when suddenly the country was thrilled by the news that the United States had entered the war. At once the nurses scattered to various parts of the country and to Europe for war activities, and it seemed as if the young sodality must perish. But its organizers persevered and before long, despite the unfavorable conditions, they succeeded in establishing it permanently. When the nurses returned from the war they gathered again about the standard of the Blessed Virgin.

Much is said nowadays about the need of keeping in touch with our nurses when they travel, of attending to their spiritual needs, of uniting them for effective cooperation, training them to eminence, utilizing their combined power for good. The sodality offers itself as an excellent means. If there is difficulty in carrying out the suggestions we have made, who would expect to secure so desirable and precious an end without paying the price of effort and thought?

Chapter VI

THE PREFECT AND SECRETARY OF THE SODALITY AND THEIR DUTIES

THE rules provide for a prefect or president of the sodality and for a first and second assistant. The purpose of the first and second assistant is to provide a substitute for the president or prefect when she is unavoidably absent. In a comparatively small sodality, such as the nurses' sodality must be from the nature of the case, it will hardly be necessary to have two assistants. A president and a vice-president, or to use the terms of the rules, a prefect and an assistant prefect, will be sufficient.

In general, it may be remarked that the officers of the sodality may be either appointed by the director or elected by the sodalists, according to the judgment of the director. Either system has its advantages and disadvantages. Where the officers are elected, the members may be better satisfied, but on the other hand, elections sometimes give occasion for the formation of cliques and factions. Nurses, however, usually elect good officers. The appointment of officers

secures individuals whom the director and Sister in charge consider most competent, but sometimes this method displeases the sodalists. Election is the more usual and generally the preferable method.

When the sodality is first organized, it may sometimes be better to appoint the officers, and afterwards, when the spirit of the sodality is thoroughly cultivated and the members are fervent and unselfish in their views, an election may be held. The important thing is to get the best officers obtainable and to encourage the members to accept their leadership. This end being kept in view, the choice of election or appointment should be made accordingly.

PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Sometimes, one or two individuals will stand out among the body of nurses as the most competent and suitable for president and vice-president. The qualities required are a capacity for leadership, true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, an exemplary life and spirit, and enough energy and interest in the work to make the one in question really capable of taking a prominent part in making the sodality a success. The president is not a mere figurehead. She ought to be very

interested and active in her work. On her largely depends the spirit and success of the sodality. The one chosen for the office should be capable of realizing and accomplishing this work.

The rules require that the prefect or president be the right hand of the director, and the same will apply when a sister directress discharges the duty of directing the sodality. This is a graphic and emphatic description of the office. A man's right hand is the instrument with which he chiefly works. Through it he touches, controls, urges on, guides, and manages his work. With his right hand the author writes, the painter delineates, the sculptor carves and models, the artisan handles his tools, the physician his instruments. What could be more necessary, more helpful, more universally employed by a man in his daily work than his right hand?

In saying, therefore, that the prefect or president should be the right hand of the director in the government of the sodality, the rules give some notion of the constant, effective, tireless, and zealous service which is expected of the one who holds that office. She is the most important among the officials of the sodality. Upon her rests the greatest responsibility for the success of the work. Hers is by no means a merely hon-

orary position. She is expected to work hard and constantly to bring the sodality up to standard.

DETAILS OF LEADERSHIP

The first influence expected of the prefect is that of personal good example and devotion to the sodality and its ideals. Unless she herself is fully persuaded of the excellence of the sodality, the desirableness of membership, and the need of meeting in all things, the standards expected of a child and special follower of the Blessed Virgin, she can hardly inspire the other sodalists with these desirable dispositions. She herself ought first to be so loyal, interested, and enthusiastic about the sodality and its work, that she can communicate the same enthusiasm to others.

The prefect should be particularly faithful in attendance at meetings and should come, if possible, a few minutes before the time of opening so as to be present when the others arrive. In case she cannot be on hand, she should always notify the assistant prefect in good time, that the latter may be certain to take her place. Either the president or vice-president ought, without fail, to be present. If in a very exceptional instance neither can attend, the president

should appoint some one else to preside over the meeting in her stead.

If the director so wishes, it is the duty of the president to preside over the meeting when it is held outside the chapel. During the recitation of the office it is the president who leads and who says the "Let us pray" at the commencement of the prayers. In some sodalities the president recites alone the versicles and the first part of the hymns, but to other sodalities it seems preferable to have all the officers say these together and to have the sodalists in a body respond. Either method may be used.

During the business meeting the president acts as chairman. She should know parliamentary law and should conduct the meetings according to the rules of order. It will be well to adopt some such book as "Roberts' Rules of Order," for the standard, and without being too rigid the president should gently insist that these rules be observed. This will not only promote good order but will be a very good training for the nurses in taking their part afterward in the proceedings of nurses' organizations. It is very desirable that our nurses should have a greater part in such activities. One reason why they are sometimes backward is that they do not feel that they

know enough about parliamentary procedure and the rules of debate. Well-conducted sodality meetings will be excellent training for them, and the president should know the rules of order very well herself so as to be able to train the sodalists in their observance.

TACTFUL INFLUENCE

While exercising her authority and making it respected, the president should be prudent and tactful and should make herself as popular as possible, not for her own sake, but that she may have greater influence on her fellow sodalists. She should inform herself about the rules of the sodality, reading the books recommended, that she may know the true purposes of the society for which she is responsible and thus be able to guide others along the right lines. She should learn what is essential for sodalists as well as what is merely recommended to them. She should consult often with the director or sister directress and be guided by them. In general, she should be an interested student of the work of other sodalities and on the alert for good suggestions as to what nurse sodalists can do for the honor of the Blessed Virgin.

When any member of the sodality seems to

be lacking in interest and enthusiasm, is critical of sodality methods or out of sympathy with the work, the president should make it her business to have a talk with the disaffected member and try to bring her to see matters more correctly. Where she sees that the member cannot be improved and that she is a bad influence in the sodality, she should suggest to her to resign, or should mention the case to the sister in charge or to the director so that they can take action. The president is naturally in closer contact with the members than the director can be, and ought to be diligent in keeping him informed as to conditions.

When one of the sodalists is absent from a meeting without excuse, the president should take notice of it and should inquire into the reason for absence. Since she ought to have the good of the sodality constantly at heart, she will naturally say a word of encouragement to the one who has been absent, reminding her of the need of faithful attendance. In case it is evident that the sodalist absents herself because of a lack of interest and appreciation, the president ought to take measures either to get her into a better disposition or to have her dismissed from the sodality.

In view of the fact that all the activities of the sodality are to a certain extent under the supervision of the president, she ought also to see to it that the other officers know and fulfil their functions. They should come to her for direction and advice and she should be ready and able to guide them and give them encouragement. In this regard, the duties of the president are similar to those of the president of any organization who is supposed to see to it that all the other officials perform their duties well, and to have an eye on the general welfare of the enterprise.

The work of the sections or committees should be particularly an object of the interest and encouragement of the president. She should insist that a good report be briefly made at each general meeting on the matters of importance which have been accomplished in each section since the previous meeting. Where any section needs more volunteers or further cooperation, she should make the necessary announcement at the meeting and see privately the individuals who are qualified to cooperate. Without seeming to domineer or to take too much upon herself, the president should guide the work of the sections and should look to it that the right activities are carried on and in the proper way.

The president should also consult from time to time with the officers, and should consider carefully whatever they have to suggest. She must keep in mind the prudent saying that it is better to set ten people to work than to do the work of ten people oneself. Every officer is to be an active sharer in sodality work, and it will exercise the tact and prudence of the president to keep them all united, interested and active, and through them to have an influence on the whole sodality. She should never grow discouraged, but should expect difficulties and persevere in spite of them.

Since she is to be the right hand of the director, she ought to consult with him also, to learn his views on sodality work and benefit by his direction. But where the director, as frequently happens in hospitals, has not the time to attend to the affairs of the sodality, the president should not be discouraged, but should energetically cooperate with the sister directress and consider that all the more opportunity is thus given herself for honoring the Blessed Virgin and showing her own capacity to serve that most good Mother by keeping up the sodality spirit and activities.

All this requires on the part of the president,

no mean gifts, both of mind and heart; the more reason that this important officer be chosen with the greatest care and encouraged to do her work excellently.

THE SECRETARY

The work of the secretary is very important, and the one chosen must be capable and willing to do what is expected of her. This holds true of all the officers of the sodality. Election to a sodality post is not a sinecure nor a mere honorary appointment. The officers should take their work seriously and if they are not willing to use ordinary diligence, they should resign and ask to have some one else take their place. Each officer has her definite part in the work of the sodality. If she does not do this part, no one will do it for her and consequently the sodality will suffer.

Promptness and exactness in doing her work will make the secretary a real factor in the progress of the sodality, but if she does not keep the records well and if she falls into a habit of procrastination, the result will be very unfavorable. The secretary should consider that she will gain a great deal of merit if she does her work well and will incur some very just blame if she neglects it. Once she has undertaken to act

as secretary, the sodality looks to her to do her duty. A paid secretary earns her wage justly by faithful performance of work. The reward of the sodality secretary is, for the most part, not here but hereafter. Surely, however, she will not be any the less diligent and anxious to do her work well because her reward is to be given to her in heaven and not on earth.

The first duty of the secretary is to keep well and faithfully, all the sodality records. She should be furnished with at least two books, one for the attendance record of the sodality, the other for the minutes of the meetings and the additional items which constitute the sodality history. In the attendance record book she should note down very accurately each time, the number who are present at meetings, the number absent with excuse, and the number absent without excuse. She should note opposite the name of each one, her presence or absence. For this she may rule the page into small squares and mark in the square after each name the letter P for present, A for absent, and E for absent with excuse. The ones who are to be considered absent with excuse are those who actually sent to the secretary or president a notification of the reason for their absence, or who, as the president

or secretary knows personally, have a good excuse for non-attendance at that meeting.

It is important for the secretary to keep an accurate record in this regard. The fact that the members know that a very accurate record is kept of their presence or absence will be an inducement to them to come faithfully. But if they feel that no one is keeping account of whether they are there or not, they will themselves not attach so much importance to regular attendance.

KEEPING OF RECORDS

Various means are suggested for keeping track of attendance, which the secretary may adopt with the approval of the prefect and the director. One way is to have a roll call at each meeting, the secretary, as we have said, noting the letter P after the name of each who answers present, and filling in later an A or an E after the other names according as she has received excuses or not. This is the more ordinary way of keeping count of attendance.

Another means is to have a rack at the door of the place where the sodality meets and to place therein a card for each sodalist. On every card is a sodalist's name and the cards are arranged in alphabetical order.

As the sodalists enter, each takes her card from the rack and drops it in the basket as a sign that she is present. The secretary can then take the cards from the basket and make up her record as before, putting the letter P opposite the names of all who have indicated their presence by putting their cards in the basket.

Attendance records may be kept on the same cards if desired. The cards should then be ruled into small squares or printed in this manner, giving as many squares as there are meetings in a year. The letters P, E, or A, as described above, may then be written in the square corresponding to the meeting. The totals may be added up and transferred into a record book, but the sodalist's individual record will always be visible on the card.

This method also makes possible an interesting inducement to attendance in the form of what is called a door prize, as has been explained in chapter IV.

Variations of this system are possible. Cards and a lead pencil may be supplied and each may write her name and drop it in the basket as she enters, but this is somewhat more complicated and wastes time. If the secretary each time replaces the card above mentioned, in alphabeti-

cal order in a rack, each member as she enters may find hers in a moment and drop it in the basket.

Another duty of the secretary is to keep the minutes and to read them at the succeeding meeting. The minutes of ordinary societies may serve as a model. The minutes should be written in a book and carefully preserved, and they should include events of interest and points of importance to the sodality, which have occurred since the preceding meeting. In this way the minutes will form a real history of the sodality and will be valuable in after years. The secretary should learn to select those special points which have a permanent value and to make her minutes at once compact and brief and very interesting.

It comes under the work of the secretary, also, to see to it that secretaries of special sections, such as the section for frequent communion, for the help of the missions, for Catholic reading, etc., should be ready to read a brief, interesting report of what has been done since the last meeting. These records, synopsized, should be made part of the records of the sodality. When they are quite bulky, they may be kept in a separate file.

VALUE OF CORRESPONDENCE

When interesting letters come, the secretary should notify the president or director and ask whether they shall be read at the meetings. If so, it is the duty of the secretary to do the reading, unless some special reader has been appointed. If the president or director so wishes, the secretary may also have charge of the regular reading at meetings, though this ordinarily belongs to the office of librarian.

The conducting of correspondence also comes within the province of the secretary, though it is customary in some sodalities to have two, one a corresponding secretary and the other a recording secretary. In the nurses' sodality the director may arrange as seems best. If one secretary can do all the work, well and good. If not, it is expedient to appoint another for the special office of corresponding secretary, giving her charge of all the letter writing and of the sending out of notices to graduate nurses not in the hospital.

The correspondence with other sodalities, especially with those for nurses, is a feature which should be emphasized and insisted on because of its great utility and interest to the members. Almost every large Catholic hospital either has or will soon organize, a sodality for nurses,

and each one devises interesting methods or has useful experience which it will be profitable to learn of. Much of this material will appear in the sodality department of "Hospital Progress," but it will be all the more interesting for the sodalists to hear directly by letter from their sister sodalities and to write them in their turn what they are doing. The mail is a wonderful means of communication, making possible the most extraordinary freedom of interchange of thoughts and experiences. It would be a pity, with such an opportunity at hand, to neglect to utilize it.

PUBLICITY

Another activity of the secretary which she should not neglect, is the sending of reports at least every three months to the editor of "Hospital Progress," giving items of interest or edification concerning the sodalities, which have come up since the last report. The secretary should look over the minutes of the meetings and the other records, take from them those things which are of general interest and will be helpful to other nurses' sodalities, and write them out in a brief and interesting way for the sodality editor.

She should also forward any pictures which will be useful for illustration, such as groups of the sodalists, sodality entertainments, etc. On special occasions, such as receptions into the sodality, unusual entertainments, and special meetings, the secretary should suggest the taking of a group picture to form part of the record of the sodality. She should keep a copy in her files or have it framed in some prominent place, and should also send a copy to the magazine.

If one secretary cannot accomplish all that has been mentioned, two or more may be appointed by the director or elected by the sodalists. Every one should know just what she is expected to do and, in this way, by a division of labor and careful organization, the work can be systematized so as not to burden any one very much. The work is important for the welfare of the sodality, and though some of these matters which we have mentioned may seem trifles, they are such trifles as secure success. It is trifles such as these, to use an old expression, which make perfection, and perfection is no trifle. Those who wish to have a good sodality and who will not take the necessary trouble are like people, who desire to have an efficient and excellent ma-

chine and will not take the pains to keep it oiled and clean and in good repair. The secretary has a very important part to play in making and keeping the sodality an efficient means for the spiritual and social welfare of its members.

Chapter VII

OTHER OFFICERS OF THE NURSES' SODALITY

BESIDES the prefect and the secretary, it is customary to have in nurses' sodalities a librarian, a reader or several readers, a treasurer, and consultors. The rules direct that there shall also be an instructor of candidates and where useful, a sacristan and a visitor of the sick. More or fewer officers may be created at the wish of the director.

The duties of the prefect or president and of the secretary have been described in chapter VI. The assistant prefect or vice-president is to be ready to help the prefect and to take her place when she is unavoidably absent, or in case she moves from the locality where the sodality exists. It is well, also, to have the vice-president in charge of one of the sections, of which she may be president or secretary. If, however, she finds enough to do for the sodality itself to take up her spare time and energies, she should devote herself to what is of first importance.

THE TREASURER

The duties of the treasurer are those which usually fall to the lot of such an official in any society. She is to take care of the funds of the sodality, keep careful accounts, and give a report from time to time as directed. In this connection, the question often arises whether it is better to have a regular monthly fee for the sodality, or annual dues, or offerings collected at the time of the meeting. The simplest plan is to have each nurse pay annual dues of one or two dollars at the beginning of the school year, or to have an entertainment for the purpose of raising funds. This gives a fund for usual expenses, and when special calls for money occur, they may be met by asking for voluntary contributions. All in all, this would seem to be a most practical plan for nurses' sodalities. The asking of monthly dues gives the treasurer a great deal of trouble and annoyance. It is not always pleasant for the members and has no very obvious advantages.

Simply to take up a collection from time to time to defray expenses may be an even better plan. Those pupil nurses who cannot afford a contribution might then be instructed to offer only a little, while the graduate nurses could give a more generous amount. At least it might be

well to try this plan in the beginning and to see how it works out in practice in the local circumstances.

The expenditures of the treasurer should, of course, be approved by the director or president, and she should be careful of the funds in her care. No very large sum need be accumulated. Where by way of exception a fair amount of money is in the treasury, it may be well to donate a part of it from time to time to charitable and religious purposes.

THE LIBRARIAN

The librarian of the sodality has an important charge. She should be active and competent. It should be her ambition to get as many first-rate books as possible and to keep them in active circulation. Not the number of books which she has in the book cases under lock and key, but the number which she keeps in active circulation and which are read by many persons, is the glory of the librarian.

She should see to it that a capable section is organized in the sodality for Catholic reading and should encourage its members to help her secure good books, either through donations of the books themselves or by contributions of money from friends of the hospital and of the

nurses. She should ask advice as to the best books, should obtain from Catholic publishers their lists and catalogs, and should read them carefully, asking counsel as to what books she had better propose for purchase by the sodality.

It should be the ambition of the librarian to keep as many books as possible in circulation, that is, in the hands of those who actually read them. Acting on the principle that books which are within arm's length of those who are to use them have the best chance of being opened and read, she should try to obtain an abundant supply of books which can be left within every one's reach. Cheap editions of standard works may be employed for this purpose, and even if one of them is carried off now and then, no great loss will result. After all, that is one way of putting books in circulation.

If the librarian becomes very much interested in her work, she will probably find time for carefully cataloging the books with the help of some of the other sodalists, and for making clippings of various subjects which are especially useful in the hospital. Thus, if some envelopes were filled with stories and illustrations clipped from Catholic papers, which could be used by the catechetical section to illustrate lessons in catechism, this

would be quite a help to the members of that section. Other similar selections of clippings about the missions, about good reading, about various methods of entertaining, etc., would be useful for the officers of the other sections.

The method of making these clippings is as follows: The librarian and some of the sodalists, who volunteer to help her, will be watchful when reading Catholic papers and magazines, for articles bearing on the subject in question, and will mark them with a blue pencil. When that issue of the paper or magazine is no longer wanted, they will clip out the articles and put them in corresponding envelopes, ready for reference.

The sodality librarian may also pay a visit to the librarian of the public library who has charge of the hospital service. To this official she can furnish lists of books which are especially wanted in the hospital, and in other ways can cooperate with the city library in getting Catholic books and other good reading into the hands of nurses and patients.

Of course, all this takes time, and nurses in hospitals have no time! This would seem an insuperable difficulty. We must remember, however, that even the busiest persons have more time than they realize and that the systematic

carrying out of the work we have suggested will not consume many hours. If the librarian is really interested in her work, she will find moments for doing it. Nurses have some hours of freedom. These should be used, of course, for recreation and exercise. The office of librarian is such a change from the ordinary routine of hospital work, that to a nurse who really likes books and is interested in promoting good reading, the work will be a relaxation and will refresh and tone up a mind tired from conscientious attention to small details.

READERS AND CONSULTORS

As to the readers appointed in the sodality, they should be carefully selected and should be the best and most capable readers among the members. Sometimes one or more of the sodalists are known to be good readers. If necessary, a test may be held by trying the members, or at least such as are willing to serve, in succession at the meetings. Thus, the good readers can be be found out by actual experience.

The choice of readers is particularly needful where reading at the meetings takes the place of the instruction. If the right books are chosen and if the reading is done excellently, with due

emphasis, pronunciation, and expression, so that the selection will come home to the hearers, such a reading will in great measure supply for an instruction.

The sodality consultors are officials much neglected in too many nurses' sodalities. Yet they have an importance in the sodality's system of government. Their name indicates that they are to be called in consultation when meetings of the sodality officers occur, and their advice is to have some influence in determining the policy of the sodality. It is customary to choose a consultor for every eight or ten members in the sodality.

Directors sometimes assign to each consultor a band of eight or ten sodalists over whom she is to have special care. This interests each consultor in a certain number of her fellow members. She watches their attendance at meetings, and when she finds that they are not present regularly, she reminds them tactfully of the time of the meetings. This she can do with propriety, because they are in her group. When volunteers are needed for some section, the consultor may be asked which members of her band are most likely to volunteer and to be competent for the work. Sometimes, she herself may approach a

sodalist and ask her to permit her name to be used as a worker.

Where the secretary finds it too difficult to address and send out personally all the required notices to the graduate nurses who are absent from the hospital, reminding them of the sodality monthly Communion, she may ask the help of the consultors, giving each a certain number of addresses. Consultors may also be made officers of the sections. In some sodalities, it is customary to give the former president and other officers preference in choosing consultors.

INSTRUCTION OF CANDIDATES

The instructor of candidates is an official whose work has fallen too much into neglect. The fact that some sodalist is especially appointed to instruct the candidates in their duties is a very good sign that membership in the sodality is taken seriously. It is really important that nurses who apply for membership and who, as the custom is, are kept as candidates for several months, to test their perseverance and fidelity to the rules of the sodality, should be taught something of those rules and made to understand what manner of organization they are about to join. It is desirable, therefore, that

every sodality have an instructor of candidates who will be willing to read the books on the sodality and to study its rules, and who will be competent to make the candidates realize what they are doing when they become sodalists.

The offices of sacristan and visitor of the sick are more needful in parish sodalities than in nurses' sodalities in hospitals, yet, because of local conditions there may be some occasion for these services. The nature of these offices is sufficiently indicated by the name.

Finally, the officers of the sodality may be more or less numerous, as the director thinks best. He may, as the rules declare, create new officers as they are needed. He may appoint several to share the same office. But all this should be done with a sole view to the interests of the sodality. Not honor, but service, is the purpose of the officers of the sodality.

Chapter VIII

NURSE SODALISTS IN NON-CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS

THE wrong impression has somehow got abroad that graduate nurses cannot continue to be sodalists, because they cannot attend the meetings of the sodality. This is a consequence, perhaps, of that other false impression that the sodality is a mere pious confraternity. But the sodality is much more than a devotion. It is a lifelong consecration, a service, a crusade of personal piety and active charity. Hence, even those who cannot attend meetings may remain members. Thus graduate nurses, even in non-Catholic institutions, may well be admitted to the sodality and continue members of it though, by reason of their work, they are lawfully excused from attendance at the meetings.

The insistence on attendance at meetings is for those who can come and should come, for those who have no good excuse for absence. In the case of a nurses' sodality, however, the graduate nurses should easily be excused, since it is so often true that they have a lawful reason for

staying away. While the failure to come to meetings without excuse for absence is a sign of lack of interest and loyalty, absence with excuse is a different thing. Hence, graduate nurses should readily be received into the sodality, if they agree to lead the life of the sodality and to observe the spirit of the sodality rules, even though they are not able to attend all the meetings.

This applies especially to Catholic nurses in non-Catholic hospitals and institutions or on private duty. But, where a nurse is in a Catholic hospital, it is hard to see how she could have any good reason for absenting herself from the sodality meetings with any frequency. Now and again good excuses may arise. But, being in the hospital, and able so easily to attend, she should be expected to be as faithful in her presence as the student nurses.

With the graduate nurse outside the hospital, however, the case is very different. She may have a long distance to go and may not be able to leave her patient at that particular time. Even with the best will in the world, especially if she is in a non-Catholic institution, she will be obliged to miss many meetings. She can almost always get to Communion on or about the date

of the monthly Communion of the sodality, and this she is expected to do, but regular attendance at meetings can hardly be required of her. Still, such a nurse sodalist may remain united in life and spirit with the sodality and may participate in all its indulgences and privileges except those which are directly attached to attendance at meetings.

NON-ATTENDANCE

The question is often asked whether non-attendance at meetings or even the failure to have meetings of the sodality, deprives the members of their right to the indulgences and privileges of sodalists. The answer is that the sodality indulgences are attached to special good works and depend on the performance of those good works. Thus, any sodalist who is absent from a meeting misses the indulgences she might have gained by attending that meeting, and any sodality which fails to have a meeting deprives its members of the indulgences which they might have gained by being present at that meeting. But, any one who is a duly received member of a sodality affiliated to the "Prima Primaria" of the Roman College obtains the sodality indulgences for visiting the sick, burying the dead, or

any other act indulgenced for sodalists, by doing the act in question.

The nurse sodalist, therefore, who cannot attend the meetings, is deprived of the indulgences for attending the meetings, but she may gain hundreds of others granted especially to sodalists, by performing the various acts of devotion or charity to which they are annexed. The fact, moreover, that she is unable to attend meetings, does not prevent her from enjoying the many other benefits of the sodality.

Those who are sodalists have a claim surely to the special protection of the holy Mother of God. They profit by a personal consecration to her service. Looking on themselves as especially devoted to the imitation of so holy a mother, they take courage to do more for their soul's welfare and for the souls of others, than they would otherwise attempt. They share besides in the benefits of association with something like seven million devoted children of Mary, in 40,000 sodalities throughout the world. Since this is so, even though they cannot attend the meetings, how many reasons there are for trying to get all good Catholic nurses, though they are in non-Catholic institutions, to enter the sodality.

The truth is that such nurses sometimes need and profit by sodality membership more than if they were in a Catholic hospital. Their surroundings are entirely secular. They lack the good influence of Catholic companionship. This may be given to them in some degree through membership in the sodality. At present it may happen, and it often does happen, that Catholic nurses work side by side in non-Catholic institutions for months and even for years before one discovers that the other is a Catholic. Through membership in a sodality which is worthy of the name, they may be introduced to each other and ever afterwards as they work side by side, feel, perhaps almost insensibly, the influence and encouragement of the other's example.

"I was surprised the other day," remarked one graduate nurse, "to find that Miss So-and-So is a Catholic. We had worked together in the same hospital for nearly a year. I always liked and admired her for her lovely character and sweet disposition, but I had no idea that she was a Catholic. Going into church, I met her in the vestibule, just coming out. 'For goodness' sake,' I said, 'what are you doing here?' 'I belong here,' she cried, 'but what are you doing here yourself;

are you a Catholic, too?" Here we had been working side by side all that time and only discovered by accident that each was a Catholic." Such instances could be recounted almost without end.

Some time since, a zealous collector for a Catholic activity was describing to us her experiences in a large hospital under non-Catholic management. Venturing into the vestibule, she found one of the elevator boys who was a Catholic, and from him she learned that there were Catholics in the institution among the nurses, but he did not know just which ones they were. He referred her, however, to the superintendent of nurses, and through that official she was allowed to speak to the nurses at their noon meal. To each Catholic nurse who contributed to her good cause, she gave a small crucifix as a token of gratitude. Then came a whole series of surprises. The superintendent put her crucifix upon her desk and one after another as the Catholic nurses came in they greeted her with the exclamation, "Oh, Miss So-and-So, are you a Catholic? I see you have a crucifix." She was surprised in turn to find how many of her staff were Catholics themselves, and all were pleased to find so many of their own faith.

ADVANTAGES OF MEMBERSHIP

Such instances merely emphasize the usefulness, if not the necessity, of enlisting in the nurses' sodality as many as possible of our Catholic nurses who work in non-Catholic institutions. They may be received on a special basis and if they need to do so they may enter a permanent excuse for not attending meetings. Then, if they can from time to time assist at the meetings of the sodality, so much the better. At least they will receive the monthly reminder of the sodality Communion; they can share in the indulgences and privileges of sodalists; they will receive a membership card, and when they travel they can affiliate themselves with any sodality for nurses in any place where they may find themselves.

One of the best ways of getting in touch with these Catholic nurses in non-Catholic institutions is to enlist the services of some zealous sodalists to visit all the non-Catholic institutions in the city and ask to speak to the Catholic nurses. The sodality may then be explained to them and its advantages emphasized. At the same time, applications may be taken for membership, each being allowed to choose the nurses' sodality she

prefers to join, in case there are several in that locality.

Then, all the Catholic nurses may be invited to a general meeting of nurses at some convenient point, such as a Catholic hospital, to hear a more detailed explanation of the sodality from the director, from some one of the nurse sodalists, or from a sister who has specially studied the subject. This meeting will be a very good occasion not only for explaining the sodality, but also for introducing to one another the Catholic nurses of the place. In such gatherings there will probably be a repetition of the pleasant surprises we have already described, where one finds that the other is a Catholic.

MEANS OF ASSISTANCE

The sodalist nurses, who cannot manage to come often to sodality meetings, should be furnished with a copy of the sodality manual and urged to recite the office of the Blessed Virgin by themselves and to read some book which treats of the sodality, on the days of the sodality meetings. They should also be encouraged to take whatever part they can in the sodality activities, and it will be found that there is always something in which they may cooperate.

They can help the missions by prayer and by giving the fruits of their self-denial; they can practice the activities of the section for frequent Communion, according to their own opportunity; they can share in the crusade for good reading, themselves procuring good books and, if possible, encouraging the buying of good books by others. These sodalists in non-Catholic institutions have special opportunities by reason of their position. Because they are in a non-Catholic environment, their Catholic fervor and zeal should be all the more carefully fostered. They come in contact with many non-Catholics and by their own tactful and enlightened zeal may interest many in our holy faith and be the means of the saving of many souls. Needless to say, the International Catholic Guild of Nurses will be a great aid in interesting graduate nurses in the sodality, especially through its sodality committee, which is especially in charge of this work.

Hitherto this great body of Catholic nurses, in non-Catholic institutions, has been too much neglected. Let us do our utmost to bring to them all the inspiration which a really well-organized and fervent sodality is capable of giving them.

In all that has been said, we mean to speak not of those half-dead and nondescript societies

which call themselves by the good name sodality, but of truly living and fervent societies which work in honor of the Blessed Virgin for self, for others, and the Church.

Chapter IX

SODALITY WORK FOR THE MISSIONS

HOUGH the activities of sodalities for nurses in training are necessarily limited by the circumstances under which they work and live, still there are some lines of effort which they can very well carry on. It is not so much a question of taking up many different enterprises, for the exigencies of the pupil nurse's life make many activities impossible. Rather, we must find things which the nurse sodalists can actually accomplish, and must then limit our suggestions to what is practicable for them.

The fact that they cannot do everything which other sodalists can is no reason why the nurses should be condemned to do nothing at all. One work which they can take up is the aid of the home and foreign missions. Ways may be found, even in the most busy training school, for enlisting the sodalists in this activity, and it will be surprising how much the nurses can accomplish in the long run that is useful and practical for the missions.

SPECIAL MISSION SECTION

A group of the sodalists, who are particularly zealous for the missions, should be formed into a committee with president, secretary, and treasurer, to be called the Sodality Mission Section, to take special care of the interests of the missions and to remind the other sodalists to help them. This section should have its meetings for a few moments immediately after the regular sodality meeting and its reports should be read during the business meeting of the sodality itself. The student nurses may affiliate with the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, and all should take a special interest in the work of the Medical Mission Board of the Catholic Hospital Association.

The first activity in behalf of the missions, which all the sodalists can practice, consists in earnest prayer for the success of the missions, both material and spiritual. In their Communions and masses, in their morning and evening prayers, and in the act by which they offer up every morning in union with the Sacred Heart their prayers, works, and suffering of the day, the sodalists should include a fervent intention for the welfare of the missions. They should pray earnestly that the missionaries, priests,

sisters, and brothers who are laboring to spread the faith in home and foreign fields, may be blessed with both spiritual and temporal aid. The need of prayer is very great wherever spiritual work is to be done, and this is particularly true when there is question of conversions to the true faith, either in the home or foreign field.

Next, the Mission Section should encourage all to help in a material way according to their means, in the work of the missions, particularly of the mission hospitals and dispensaries in which nurses should be specially interested. Graduate nurses can make substantial offerings if they will. Student nurses are, of course, usually not able to give much to the missions, but their mite cheerfully and lovingly given is of no little importance as an evidence of good will, interest, and zeal, for the spread of the faith.

SELF-DENIAL FUND

One of the best means we can suggest for systematizing the work for the missions among nurse sodalists is the establishment of the Self-denial Fund. The idea of this fund is as follows: There are many little expenses which upon reflection will be found unnecessary; sometimes, indeed, they are actually detrimental. Thus, how

many nickels and dimes go for car fare for short distances where it would be more beneficial to walk! How much small change is expended for confectionery, for ice cream, and for various knick-knacks of no particular use whatsoever! The principle of the Self-denial Fund is to make little acts of mortification by refraining now and then from buying such articles, and to give the money thus saved to the missions.

A double benefit comes from this practice. There is the merit of personal mortification and self-control and besides there is the substantial aid given to the needy missions. If, in each hospital, each nurse performed even one act of self-denial during the week and gave the money to the Self-denial Fund, say to the amount of a single dime, where there were fifty nurses this would amount to something like two hundred and fifty dollars in the course of a year. If all the Catholic nurses in training adopted this salutary practice, it would mean at least twenty-five thousand dollars as an annual contribution, a sum which might result in the saving and sanctifying of countless souls. Of course, this record is hardly to be hoped for, but these figures give some notion at least of what the small contributions of many can do for the missions. The grad-

uate nurses could easily give much more as the fruit of their self-denial.

The Mission Section can also organize from time to time small entertainments in aid of the missions. The members can collect books and other useful articles to send to missionaries, whose addresses may be obtained from the missionary societies. They can likewise gather up articles no longer wanted in the hospital, but which would be of welcome usefulness if sent to the mission hospitals. It is a capital idea, in the case of a large school, to have the sodalists adopt some special mission hospital and try to send thither whatever supplies and furnishings the sodalists can collect.

PRACTICAL GIFTS

Bandages, absorbent cotton, drugs, instruments, and apparatus, which may no longer be of use in well-to-do and sumptuously furnished hospitals here at home, would be a God-send to the poor and struggling mission hospitals. It is said that old linen, which no longer serves its original purpose in the hospital, can be used by cutting out the good and serviceable pieces for finger towels, etc., for the missionary priests. Some sodalists have also found it practical to ob-

tain worn-out vestments from the city churches where they are no longer wanted, and by putting in new pieces of silk or braid, make them most welcome and serviceable in the poor mission chapels where the priest has sometimes scarcely the essentials for the decent celebration of the holy sacrifice of the mass.

The nurse sodalists, who have special care of the mission work, should also become thoroughly acquainted with the needs of the missions and should correspond with some missionary priests and sisters to find out from them just what they need, and how they can be aided. They can remail to the missions in far-off lands or to mission districts at home, Catholic magazines and papers which are no longer wanted about the hospital, and can thus cheer and help the lonely missionaries who crave for news from the Catholic centers at home.

SPECIAL SUPPLIES

Sometimes, too, the Mission Section can send out special supplies to the missionary sisters. We remember once receiving an interesting and touching letter from a sister who was working with two or three of her community in an African village fifty miles from any other white folk. She specially wanted some photographic material

as she had a camera and wished to take pictures to interest those at home and show them what the sisters were accomplishing. The difficulty she had met was that all the photographic supplies they could buy thereabouts were spoiled by the heat and dampness of the climate.

Through correspondence with a large manufacturer of photographic materials, we found that it was possible to send films and papers in sealed cans, impervious to moisture and heat. The films were accordingly forwarded in these special packages, and in reply came a note from the sister expressing her joy and gratitude at being at last able to take good pictures of her charges. In some such way the nurse sodalists who have joined the Mission Section can learn of and minister to the needs of the missionaries, priests, sisters, and brothers.

All this will not necessarily involve any very serious expenditure of time or money. If the work is systematized, an hour or so every week will be sufficient to conduct correspondence, etc., and if this is too much time for the secretary of the section to give, she can get some of the others to help her. It would be very interesting to read to the sodality at general meetings, some of the

more entertaining letters received from the missionaries.

A small box should be put up in some convenient place in the nurses' home and marked Self-denial Fund, and into this the nurses can drop whatever pennies, nickels, or dimes they save through their acts of self-denial. At the end of each week or month, as is more convenient, the contents of the box may be removed and sent by check or money order to the Self-denial Fund, care of "Hospital Progress," Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from where it will be sent to the missions.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

The collection of postage stamps of larger denominations than two cents is also a good way of helping missions, and some of the nurses who are interested in this may get their friends, who work in offices, to save stamps of large denominations and send them to the nurses' sodality, where they can be bundled together and sent to a mission center. Many hundreds of dollars are gained for the missions every year by selling canceled stamps of larger denominations. Collectors of different lands pay generously for these stamps, which are bought and redistributed by stamp-selling agencies.

In all these suggestions we have not lost sight of the special difficulties which attend this sort of work in the hospital, where every one's time is so much taken up and where it is so hard to find energy and leisure for such activities. Experience has shown, however, that where there is a will there is a way. After all, many moments of time offer themselves which can be profitably and interestingly used to do a bit for the missions. If an energetic group of nurses once take up with enthusiasm the mission work, they will surprise themselves as well as others by the amount they can do in spite of their other occupations and the other demands upon their time. We, therefore, recommend to all the sodalists a special interest and zeal in behalf of the missions, and to every sodality the formation of a special section to systematize and encourage the work. This is the hour of God in the foreign missions and our nurses will wish to have their share in this holy work of spreading the faith.

Chapter X

THE NURSES' SODALITY AND CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION

IT is particularly desirable, indeed it is necessary, that the Catholic nurse in active practice have a thorough, sure, and ready knowledge of her religion. She needs to know thoroughly the doctrines of the Church as well as her ethical principles. She should be unusually well equipped in this regard for her own sake, as also for the sake of her patients. To reach the highest standard in her professional life, she requires all the strength and light which her Catholic faith, well understood, can afford her. She can help and benefit her patient in a spiritual way in direct proportion to the thoroughness and readiness of her knowledge of Catholic teaching on faith and principle.

These things may be obvious enough, but they are too often overlooked in practice. The catechetical instruction of the nurses is too frequently left out of the program of their studies. It is presumed (often a very gratuitous presumption) that they have learned all that is necessary about their religion before they enter

the school of nursing. Hence, nothing more is done either to test the extent of their previous information or to supplement their training in Catholic teaching by further instructions especially suited to trained nurses. This is a mistake from the standpoint both of the nurses' interests and those of her future patients.

To be a good Catholic, it is not sufficient merely to have been baptized. Thorough instruction in the doctrines of the Church is required to give the mind and the character that influence of Christian faith and principle which show themselves in a truly Catholic life. Ignorance outside the Church, of her real dogmas and moral teachings, is among the chief causes of bigotry. Ignorance within the Church and among Catholics, of Catholic doctrine, is responsible for many evils among Catholics themselves.

Those who take up a profession like nursing, in which they have to deal intimately with persons who are in particular need of spiritual help, as well as of physical healing, ought to be particularly well equipped in regard to catechetical teaching. Their personal efficiency will be greatly increased by such a knowledge, and they will be able, when the proper moment arrives, to help others in a way impossible to the ignorant and

ill instructed. Catechetical instruction in the training school, therefore, is something more than a mere luxury or a superfluity. It is a real part of the special training which Catholic nurses should receive.

PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

Time and again, during a nurse's career, she will be brought face to face with problems which require for their solution a good working knowledge of Catholic teaching. She may be far away from any one who can give her information on such topics. If she herself has not had good teaching, or has not read and absorbed the right doctrines of the Church, she will be at a loss and will find it difficult to square her actions as she should with Catholic principle. In the school of nursing the pupils are under good influences. They may be taken hold of and taught. Their deficiencies in Catholic training may, to some degree, be remedied. Best of all, they may be given the priceless habit of reading for themselves and of seeking in Catholic books the information and knowledge which will complete their catechetical education.

In dealing with their future patients, the nurses will likewise be far better off for a thor-

ough catechetical training. To the patient, anxious about his condition, in the unusual environment of a sick room, dependent for so many services, his nurse becomes in a way an oracle, and he listens with an intense attention to whatever she says. Besides, when nursing in private families, how often the nurse is asked questions or given openings for explanations about her religion.

The nurse who is both tactful and well informed may thus find occasions for giving tactful and unobtrusive instruction on religious subjects. She can answer questions in such a way as to lead to further explanations of right principle and Catholic truth. If she is full of her religion, loves it ardently, understands it adequately, she can and will introduce it as a subject of conversation, not for purposes of barren controversy or acrimonious discussion, but so as to give to others what she knows in her own case to be the most precious of possessions.

A CATHOLIC TRAINING

How may catechetical instruction be introduced into the already over-crowded curriculum of the training school? Granted that it is good and necessary, where can we find it a place?

Time is already so taken up between study and practice, that there does not seem room for anything more. The requirements of nursing education on strictly professional lines, and the competition and pressure of non-Catholic schools of nursing, make it very hard to introduce Catholic catechetical training.

This is very true and very significant as well. The characteristically Catholic features of our training of nurses are always in danger of being crowded out and pushed aside by the pressure of outside influences or the mere multiplication of interior details. It is curious that where there is question of economizing time or effort, the tendency is to put aside those very elements of our training which mark us as Catholics.

The chief purpose of our Catholic schools in general, and of our nursing schools in particular, is to turn out Catholic graduates with the emphasis on Catholic. A most important aspect of our work, therefore, is to introduce into an excellent and thorough professional training, a strong atmosphere of Catholicity. When we allow the catechetical training of our pupils to be thrust aside and crowded out by other details of the work, we frustrate to that extent a prime purpose of our schools.

This is one among several reasons why so much stress is being put upon the need for well organized and fervent nurses' sodalities. These will emphasize and bring forward in concrete form, the Catholic element of our nurses' training. Through their sections or committees, established one by one as opportunity serves, the sodalities will give to the training school the Catholic tone. They will also make practicable the introduction of definite activities for such essential purposes as this of catechetical training.

The organization of the section for catechetical studies in the nurses' sodality should include a training of the members in teaching catechism. The sodality library should be well supplied with books on this subject, of which an abundance can be had from Catholic publishers. From time to time the general instructions to the sodality should also turn upon catechetical teaching by sodalists. Now and then, also, a meeting could be entirely devoted to this topic. Short, interesting paragraphs may be read on the need and benefits of catechetical teaching, and material can be had from such associations as the Catholic Instruction League, 1076 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago.

Certain of the graduate nurses, who have had experience in instructing patients or in teaching children catechism, may be asked to speak of their methods. Some pastor or assistant may be called in to address the nurses on the benefits and methods of catechetical work. Such special meetings may take the place of the regular exercises from time to time, the usual conference or reading and the recitation of the office being replaced by the talk on catechetical work and by the recitation of some prayers to the Blessed Virgin for the spread of the faith and for the better knowledge of its teaching by both Catholics and non-Catholics.

TO ENCOURAGE INTEREST

In some hospitals, the practice exists of having the pupil and graduate nurses who are qualified to do so, give preliminary instructions to such patients as ask to be prepared for reception into the Church. They can teach the catechism, hearing the lessons, and giving what information they can on the subject in question. This removes some of the difficulties of the chaplain, who will, of course, give the final instructions and supply whatever is wanting. It has a very good effect, also, on the nurses themselves, who are encour-

aged by the experience they receive, and who learn how they can help their patients in this regard when they are outside of the hospital and have no one else to depend on.

If the nurses are once effectively interested in catechetical work, it will be all the easier to get them to acquire the habit of reading books which treat of Catholic doctrine, so that they may become better informed themselves and able to help others more efficaciously. Good books exist in sufficient numbers to give an industrious reader thorough information on Catholic doctrine. Once the taste for such reading is cultivated, the nurse is sure to become well informed about her faith. If she has access to a good library of catechetical books or can be encouraged to buy them for her own use, she can continue to add to her store of catechetical information and will become more and more competent to help herself and others.

Surely this element of Catholic training needs to be stressed in a special way at this crowded and distracting time. We do not minimize in the least the difficulties and obstacles to these sodality sections for catechetical study. But, the

chief difficulty is to arouse enough interest and energy to establish and continue these sections along practical lines. Once this zealous energy exists, it will sweep all obstacles before it.

Chapter XI

KEEPING THE GRADUATES' INTEREST

ONE of the most serious difficulties encountered by the earnest superintendent of a school for nurses is the problem of keeping in touch with graduates of the nursing school, after they have left the institution and gone out to work in other hospitals, or in private families, sometimes at a distance from the school in which they took their training. Students in training are in constant contact with the superintendent. She comes to know them quite intimately until they leave her care and drift away to other places, when her hold upon them seems suddenly to cease.

The situation is indeed a very difficult one. Nurses sometimes change their addresses so frequently, it is hard to keep an up-to-date list of the whereabouts of all graduates. They dislike to write letters and forget to keep the school informed as to their changes of location. It is hard for them to come back to attend the meetings. Thus, in many cases, the school entirely loses track of the graduate student. She has gone away and left no trace behind.

We have often suggested a plan which will be at least a partial remedy for this condition. If the nurses' sodality were to inspire its members with a real zeal for continued membership, even after graduation, and if the nurses themselves were stirred up to an interior loyalty toward it, this desire to keep in touch with their school sodality would be a decided incentive to them to send in their change of address, that they might receive the sodality notices.

A MONTHLY NOTICE

Besides this, we emphatically suggest that the secretary of the sodality send out very faithfully to every graduate nurse working outside the hospital where the sodality exists, a monthly notice, written or printed on a post card, reminding the absent nurse sodalist that the monthly Communion of the sodality will occur on such and such a date and asking her to receive Holy Communion on that day, or as near that day as possible. This regular notice will encourage the distant member to take part at least to that extent in sodality activities, and will serve to renew from time to time the contact of the nurse with her sodality.

We should not forget the benefit which comes

from a renewal of old memories and associations. The graduate nurse may have drifted far from the mental attitude and the spiritual state which she had while in training. The instructions and suggestions given her for her spiritual profit, the good influences brought to bear upon her, the associations which helped her there, may have grown very dim and weak with the passage of time. But the contact with her old sodality, which comes from receiving a personal notice and request to go to Communion in spiritual union with the sodality, sometimes serves to refresh all those former beneficial associations.

Who does not know the precious and singular fruits of recalling good memories? When the young nurse is in training, her enthusiasms are sometimes fresh and unspoiled, her susceptibility to good impressions is great, her ideals are unharmed by the disillusionments of after life. Later on, when she is struggling with discouragement and, it may be, with temptation, when the sordid realities of the world weigh heavily upon her spirit—the remembrance of her old sodality may be like a breath of refreshment and inspiration from her by-gone youth.

To make this plan successful to the full, and to secure the greatest efficacy for these monthly

notices, it is essential, of course, to make the nurses' sodality a living and potent influence on the life of a nurse while at school. Too often, the sodality for nurses is looked upon as a mere pious confraternity, a devotion, and nothing more. Nurses come to the meetings because they are expected to, but with little spontaneous enthusiasm or fervor. They are kept in a passive attitude; they have nothing to do themselves, but merely listen to a more or less appropriate instruction and recite an office which becomes a mechanical repetition.

No wonder that they show no enthusiasm for keeping in touch with such a society. In fact, there is nothing to keep in touch with. There are no activities for the nurses themselves. There are no traditions or ideals to be kept in mind and heart. Instead of the sodality's being as it should be, a personal, lifelong consecration, a way of life, a devotion to the Blessed Virgin, lived out in such interior fervor of the Catholic life as will spontaneously express itself in good works, it becomes a mere tiresome formality. In such a case, the sending of monthly notices to the graduate nurses will only recall to them the tedium they felt in attending meetings while at school.

To make the nurses loyal to the sodality, the work must be done from the interior and not from the exterior alone. In other words, the first effort should be directed toward getting the nurses so to appreciate and love the sodality that their lifelong adherence to it will be a matter of personal loyalty, and not a routine or matter of exterior pressure. It is much harder to do this than merely to insist upon their physical presence at the meeting. But, great as is the effort required, it is worth while if it results in a lifelong inward loyalty to the sodality and its spirit.

We do not in the least minimize the many obstacles which hospital life, crowded, distracted, insistent in its constant demands on the energy both of body and mind, offers to sodality organization. It is never easy to inspire sodalists with the full and splendid vigor of the sodality spirit. The difficulty becomes greater still in a nurses' school. Yet, experience has shown that though difficult, the task is by no means impossible. Presupposing a certain degree of devotion and understanding on the part of the sister or priest in charge of the sodality and of its officers, the plan we have suggested can be carried through.

Who shall be responsible for the details of

this suggested work? So far as the question of sending out the monthly notices is concerned, it may be done by the secretary of the sodality. But, the inspiring of the sodalists with zeal and love for sodality membership and with a lifelong devotion to the Blessed Virgin must largely result from the efforts of the priest or sister in charge. Where the chaplain can do this work, well and good. But where, as so often happens in our hospitals, a sister must for some reason or other carry the principal burden of sodality promotion and direction, it is she who has to secure the training of the pupil nurses, and perhaps of the graduates also, in the sodality spirit of loyalty.

PERSONAL ENTHUSIASM AND APPRECIATION

It is necessary for the sister in charge to have a very deep and practical understanding of the sodality spirit and a personal enthusiasm and appreciation. Fervor and zeal are contagious. Whenever one sees a successful sodality it is because some self-sacrificing enthusiastic worker has given time and effort to make it so. In those hospitals where at present fervent and effective sodalities exist and flourish, this is in conse-

quence of some one's personal effort. At times, it is the chaplain, who is so persuaded of the excellence of the sodality that he communicates his inspirations to the sodalists. At times, it is one of the sisters who chiefly upholds the life and interest of the sodality. It has happened that one of the officers has supplied the necessary fire to warm and invigorate the sodality organization. It is best of all when chaplain, sisters, and sodalists all entertain a very high appreciation of the sodality and promote its interest in cooperation. But, some one must work, and at times must suffer, in order that the good results may be achieved.

Finally, perseverance and persistent effort are required to make a sodality a success in a hospital. It is vain to expect great things without continued trying. The first attempt may be a blank failure. So may the second and third. But nothing, no obstacle or discouragement, should be allowed to stand in the way of continued effort. Sometimes, after many trials and failures, the final result has been a well organized and enthusiastic sodality, full of benefit for the nurses and for all with whom they have come to deal.

We have never claimed that the sodality is an *easy* means of organizing nurses and keeping them in touch with their school, but, only that it is *effective* beyond most other means.

Chapter XII

SOME FURTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE SODALITY

THE possibilities of a really fervent and well-organized sodality for nurses are only limited by the time and energy which its members can find for promoting its activities. Nor, should any one think, reading the good works suggested, that more hours are needed to accomplish even a few of these things than the nurses have at their disposal.

The difficulty is not so much one of time as of interest and method. There is always need of some one to act the part of reminder and encourager, and this individual surely deserves a great deal of credit and gains much merit. For one person who will lead and inspire, there are hundreds who will follow and participate in the work. Thus, for the ordinary as well as for the extraordinary activities of the sodality, some one must be found who will take the burden of promoting.

Sometimes this individual is a priest, the director of the sodality, or some other, who will give thought and time to organizing sodality

work. On other occasions, a sister must take the task, and on her shoulders will descend the responsibility and the merit as well. Sometimes, one or several of the sodalists develop the initiative and enthusiasm to make the sodality successful. Up to this time, there has been a want of sufficient promoters of that description whether among the clergy, the sisters, or the laity. They must be secured in greater number, if the sodalities for nurses are to succeed.

POSSIBILITIES OF VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

Given an interested, energetic, and tactful person, who will work for sodality welfare, the possibilities of activity are various. Organization is always difficult, but it has the extraordinary advantage of making possible things otherwise entirely out of question. To begin even the humblest organization is like planting a seed of which we do not know the species or the possibilities. It may grow up into a beautiful flower, or it may shade the ground with verdure. It will continue perhaps to flourish and increase years after the planter has passed away. The seeds of the mightiest trees are often slight and wind-blown atoms. A living organization, like a

living organism, may commence most obscurely and grow upward to the sky.

Besides the specific activities of the sodalities already suggested, its sections and organized work, there are many other fields of effort which may be entered by a capable director, or officer, or even a simple sodalist. In fact, it is part of the sodality idea, as we conceive it, to vary the activities and enterprises, and to introduce new interests and enthusiasm from time to time by diversifying the work.

What is new is usually more interesting than things to which one is accustomed. To take up even for a time some novel and interesting phase of work attracts attention and stimulates effort. For this reason, those in charge of the sodality should be on the lookout, and should make it a point to leave off for a while the activities which have become monotonous and to introduce new ones in their stead. Local circumstances must determine to some degree the source of these activities. But, some suggestions may be in order.

LEADERSHIP

It has often been remarked that Catholic nurses, who form so large a proportion of the nursing profession, do not at all exercise their

due share of influence in the nurses' societies. They seem to some observers more timid and less able to take leadership than the non-Catholic nurses. If this be true, it is a pity. Catholic nurses have special qualifications for leadership, in the sureness of their principles and the correctness of their ideal. We often say, and truly, that the Church possesses the solution of modern ethical problems. But, if Catholics neglect to achieve leadership, how shall these precious Catholic principles be communicated to the nursing profession?

It should be the ambition of every nurses' sodality to cultivate in its members initiative and a capacity for leadership. They should be encouraged to take an active part in sodality discussions and should thus be trained in speaking and debate. It is, of course, much easier to keep the members in a merely passive state and force them to be satisfied only with coming to meetings, and practicing a certain amount of devotion. But, such an attitude does not help to develop leadership. If the sodalists are encouraged to speak their minds freely, to take a part of the responsibility, to make decisions, to stand up for their opinions in debate, this will develop the hardy faculties which they need in the larger

efforts of nurses' organizations. It is very much worth while to take some pains of this sort to form leaders.

The business meetings offer some opportunity for this training. They should be conducted in a regular parliamentary way, according to the rules of order. The president should be allowed to preside and the members to speak their minds; debaters should be held to the point in question and the regular procedure of passing resolutions, etc., should be observed. This is valuable training.

In the general conventions of nurses' associations, the graduates of Catholic schools sometimes remain silent, because they have no experience in public speaking. They are afraid of making errors. They do not know how to get the floor. Courses in public speaking and parliamentary law should be provided. Even the brief practice of sodality business meetings would be a training for the student nurses. The point should be emphasized in talks to the sodalists that they must take active part in the meetings, so as to train themselves for leadership in the larger sphere of nurses' conventions.

SODALITY SECTIONS AND THEIR ADVANTAGES

The sections of the sodality give an even wider scope for this training. Each section should be entrusted to the guidance of a different chairman, and every chairman should be allowed a certain degree of initiative and responsibility. The work of each section is interesting in itself and capable of inspiring enthusiasm. The director or prefect should aim, not at doing the work personally, but at influencing the chairman of the section to take hold with energy and push it through.

Thus, the Mission Section should be put in the hands of a sodalist, who will give her spare time to the cause of the self-denial fund and of prayer and work in other ways for missions. One energetic chairman, who will take care of the box for contributions, speak to the other nurses about the self-denial fund, and really take upon herself the promotion of work and prayer for the missions, can make this section a success. At the same time, she is cultivating her own initiative and capacity, and preparing for larger service when the opportunity comes.

Similarly, the nurse chosen to lead the section for frequent Communion should be given a sense of personal responsibility for the progress of that

crusade, and should be encouraged to look on it as under her care. The same may be said of the one who is chosen to lead the campaign for good reading in the hospital. All these personal activities, on the part of the chairmen of the sections, are useful and valuable, not only for the immediate returns they bring, but for the training of character they impart.

The same thing may be said of the members of the sodality, who take part in the work of the sections. Each one of them gets a certain degree of training in self-sacrifice and altruism, in proportion to the personal efforts she makes. It would be useful to have sections for this result alone, even though they brought no appreciable returns (as, however, they will) in actual service to their cause.

PERSONAL EMINENCE

Besides training leaders, the sodality should try, through its various activities, to stir up in its members a desire for personal eminence in their profession and the zeal for becoming specially equipped in some particular phase of it. This "service of eminence," as we have many times called it, is of special moment nowadays when one sees on the horizon more rigid regula-

tions for schools of nursing and a more strict demand for thorough professional education as a preparation for teaching therein. One Catholic nurse, who is really eminent in her profession and who has used opportunities and made occasions for self-improvement, is worth more to the Church from the professional standpoint than a dozen who are satisfied with mediocrity and who go about their work with no ultimate intention of excelling therein. A few really outstanding figures in the nursing field will bring more credit on Catholic schools and do more to raise the standards of nursing, than hundreds of mediocre workers.

Yet, eminence is not so much a question of genius as of determined effort rightly directed. There are undoubtedly many pupils in our schools today and young graduate nurses in our hospitals, who are qualified intellectually and by natural gifts to become eminent in the nursing profession. They have everything required to rise professionally but determination and a definite purpose. These should be given them wherever possible, through the efforts of the sodality. The daily routine of the nurse is not particularly inspiring to eminence. She has so many things to do and think of hour by hour

that the higher opportunities of her profession are obscured. Therefore, she specially needs inspirational conferences, lectures, addresses, round table talks, debates, etc., which bear upon the subject of professional eminence and call her attention to the greater opportunities which nursing offers her if she will study and work to attain them.

The sodality should furnish such conferences and addresses. Those in charge ought to make it their business to secure a fund for the remuneration of men and women who will talk capably to the nurses along these lines. From the hospital itself, or from benefactors, or by holding entertainments, or in some other legitimate way, the sodality should acquire a fund for this purpose. It is a serious error to expect speakers to volunteer for such addresses and not to offer them any honorarium. It is unjust to them and to the hospital also. They will not continue their addresses, not being able to afford to do so without some recognition in the way of an offering. Thus, the nurses are deprived of a great source of inspiration.

In these and other ways, the sodalities for nurses may very usefully vary their field of action and discover more and more ways of hon-

oring the Blessed Mother by activities not out of place in the nurses' lives. The director and the officers, helped by the sodalists themselves, should continually be on the lookout for good suggestions and should be willing to give to other sodalities the benefits of their own experiences. The sodalities which undertake such activities are also preparing their members to take an effective part in the work of the International Catholic Guild of Nurses, one of whose chief purposes is to encourage leadership and the service of eminence.

Chapter XIII

SODALITY WORK FOR GOOD READING

BUSY nurses, both pupils and graduates, sometimes have the idea that they have no time to read. Yet, if they would add up all the moments which come to them in the course of a single week, when they could pick up some useful, interesting book and run through its pages, they would be surprised to find how much time is at their disposal. The secret of encouraging good reading, as we have several times said, is to put just the right sort of book within arm's reach, precisely at the moment when we have leisure to read. It is human nature to wish to take as little trouble as possible and so, when we find ourselves with a moment to spare, our instinct is to reach out for anything which lies at hand and to read it, because it is convenient.

The average nurse would also be surprised, if she carefully added up all the reading actually done in the course of a week or a month, to see over how many lines of print her eyes have actually traveled. There are, of course, for the pupil, lessons from textbooks which have to be read and pondered upon. Graduate nurses, too, if they

are wise, will keep up a due amount of study. But, over and above this necessary reading, how many pages of newspapers or magazines are perused in the course of a month! Any one, who reads even a quarter of an hour a day for a month's time, has let her eyes travel over some miles of print. If this reading has been trivial, worthless, or even harmful, the time spent in reading is wasted or worse. If the right sort of books and magazines have been close at hand, then we are the better for every quarter of an hour we have spent with them.

These considerations make it very important to have a section in the nurses' sodality for the special purpose of promoting good reading. A group of the nurse sodalists should be interested, in a particular way, in the welfare of the sodality library and in the work of encouraging good Catholic reading. System and method are particularly needed in this matter, because there is question of encouraging the actual circulation of good books and not merely of keeping them on the shelves of book cases.

THE NURSES' LIBRARY

The nurses' library should be very carefully selected, with a view to the needs and tastes of

the nurses themselves. The number of volumes in the nurses' library should surely not be less than two hundred, and these should be not merely books of any kind, but useful, living books, that can be kept in constant circulation among the nurses and their patients. Careful selection is advisable when buying new books, and we shall suggest a list of books which are suitable for the nurses' sodality library.

Besides these books, which are part of the permanent furnishing of the nurses' home, it is possible to secure abundant supplies of Catholic books and other publications of value from the public library. In most places, the public library is very willing to send to hospitals, which do not take contagious cases, boxes of books which may be kept for a reasonable time and then returned to the library. These books may be selected from the general catalogues of the libraries. The librarians are often willing to have a special list made of the Catholic books which are available for lending in this way. In some libraries, a special official is delegated to take books to the hospitals and distribute, or loan them there.

ADVANTAGES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Borrowing books from the public library has a double advantage, if the volumes secured are by

Catholic writers. First, the hospital can in this way offer its patients and the nurses a very wide range of selections without going to the great expense of purchasing all the books required, and fresh supplies can be obtained and a constant circulation kept up in this way. Secondly, as we have previously pointed out, the fact that Catholic books are called for in numbers stimulates the purchase of more Catholic works by the library authorities, whose chief purpose is to serve as many as possible and to be able to show at the end of the year as large a total as practicable of books kept in bona fide circulation.

The objection is made by some hospital authorities that in borrowing books in this way, the institution becomes liable for them. Where a librarian is sent to the hospital, this is not the case. Then, too, with ordinary care, few volumes should be lost. Even if a small proportion of them were sacrificed, and the hospital had to replace them, the expense would be much less than if the books were bought when not permanently needed. There are some books which should be purchased, and kept in possession by the sodality or the hospital, but others are not wanted constantly, though they are interesting and useful for occasional reading. The library itself should

be built up of books of constant value and use, and the others can be obtained from the public library.

DISTRIBUTION OF BOOKS

In distributing the books to the nurses, it should be kept in mind that the more convenient good reading is made for them, the more they will read good books. Where you see a nurse go on night duty with a copy of a flaring popular magazine on her desk, you can pretty well predict what sort of reading she is going to do in the spare moments during the night. If you see on her desk an interesting copy of a Catholic magazine, or a book of real worth, you can be sure that she will pick it up during those leisure moments. If, therefore, you wish to help her to good reading, make it as convenient as possible for her to get Catholic books and encourage her to have them always within arm's reach.

The Catholic nurse should be interested in acquiring, by good reading, a better knowledge of her religion, both for her own benefit and for that of her prospective patients. The pupil nurse will find it very helpful to this end, to choose books which deal with Catholic teachings in an interesting way. The nurse should be brought to have a personal wish to acquire more informa-

tion about her religion by reading. To urge people to read books to which they have no inclination is often a waste of time. The wiser plan is first by tactful talk, praise, and encouragement to induce a real desire to acquire information, and then to furnish the books from which it can be had.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

In the curriculum of the school, the need for giving the nurses better instruction in their religion is easily lost sight of. In point of fact, some pupils of nursing schools are quite deficient, as we have said, in religious knowledge and, even where they do possess average training, there are always considerable gaps to be filled in and points of information still to be supplied.

It is a truism to say, that if a Catholic nurse in active practice is fervent and well informed about her own religion, she can exercise a singular influence for good upon her patients and help their souls as well as their bodies. But, if she is ignorant and feels her ignorance of her religion, she will naturally be timid and afraid. By reading the right sort of Catholic books, our nurses will come to have confidence in their own ability to speak of religion when the occasion

arises and will gradually become well enough informed to answer the questions which their patients may later ask them.

CATHOLIC BOOKS

Nurses should likewise be encouraged to look on Catholic books and on good books in general as an important part of their personal possessions, and to consider the purchase of them as a normal feature of their budget. At the present time, most of the Catholic laity look on Catholic books as a luxury and expect either to do without them or to receive them as presents from priests or sisters. This is an abnormal condition. Books are almost as much a necessity for the mind as are food and clothing for the body, and they form an item of due expense. Through the sodality section for good reading, the nurses should be encouraged to buy books from time to time out of their own funds, either for themselves or for the sodality library. The graduate nurses are well able to do this, and some of the pupil nurses may also manage from time to time to buy Catholic books.

To establish a sodality library of the kind we have mentioned, one good plan is to get every graduate nurse to buy one book, and to have

pupil nurses group themselves together by twos or threes, each group to make up the price of a volume. Others, outside the sodality, may also be asked for contributions, and in this way it will not be hard within a reasonable time to get together the two hundred volumes which should be the minimum of the nurses' sodality library.

The leaders in this work, the nurses who take special charge of the library and its interests and of the general work of circulating Catholic books among the nurses and patients, should be grouped into a section or committee with its own officers, a president, secretary and treasurer. This committee should meet for a few minutes after every regular sodality meeting, whenever there is any special business to be attended to, and its secretary should read at each general meeting a brief report of the work of the section since the previous gathering. This will interest the other members and will give a good occasion to ask for help, or to secure new volunteers when they are needed for the work of the section.

The gradual introduction of more and more activity in behalf of Catholic books will lead to the discovery of the best ways of circulating them, under local conditions, among patients and nurses. The patients also need good reading, and

while it will be a matter of local decision whether the nurses' library should also be used by the patients, or whether a separate library should be established for their benefit, good books ought to be made convenient, in any case, for them as well as for the nurses.

At present, in many hospitals, so far as our observation has gone, this matter of good reading is one of the needs most often overlooked. Cheap magazines, best sellers, daily papers of every kind, drift constantly through rooms and corridors and so the reading matter at hand is trivial and, even where bad publications are discouraged, good books are not supplied. This explains why so little Catholic reading is done. It should be the work of the hospital authorities, aided by the sodality section for good reading, to give Catholic books at least an equal chance, by making them as convenient and accessible in the hospital rooms, wards, and corridors as are now the worthless or harmful publications circulated so industriously by great commercial agencies.

Chapter XIV

THE NURSES' SODALITY AND OUTSIDERS

THE objection is sometimes raised, or the difficulty proposed, that to group some of the Catholic nurses into a sodality causes trouble in hospitals where there are protestant as well as Catholic nurses. The nurses who are not sodalists are kept out of sodality meetings and hence feel a certain sense of injury. The sodality sets up an exclusive circle. It causes disunion among the nurses.

In answer to this, it may be said that in most Catholic hospitals, even where there are quite a number of non-Catholic nurses in the training school, this difficulty does not seem to be experienced. The sodality is not exclusive in the sense that it arbitrarily admits some and keeps out others. Any nurse who will try to live up to sodality ideals and keep the rules is welcomed into membership. Of course, those who are not Catholics cannot be received, as they are incapable of living up to the rules unless they become good Catholics. This they are free to do if they wish. However, even Catholics, who do not wish to

make the necessary sacrifices and the required efforts to be good sodalists, are not received. Any nurse who is unwilling or unable to live up to the requirements of the sodality can scarcely expect to receive the privilege of membership.

A greater difficulty would seem to arise from the fact that non-members are excluded from sodality meetings and from entertainments, etc., given for sodalists. But, this exclusion is neither necessary, nor, in most cases, wise. Any nurse who wishes to attend may be given admission to meetings and entertainments, unless some very grave reason exists for exclusion of non-members from one or the other meeting. Since the sodality in the hospital should be made the central and usual means of promoting the devotion, the social life, and the active charity of the nurses, it would not be well to limit participation in its activities to those who are actually members. "From every one according to her ability, to every one according to her needs," is a good motto in this connection. The greatest good to the greatest number would seem to require that every one in the hospital, Catholic or non-Catholic, should derive as much benefit as possible from the sodality, and should give it as much help and cooperation as

is practicable. For this reason, meetings and activities may be made common to all.

INDUCEMENT TO SODALITY MEMBERSHIP

It may be asked, what inducement is there for a nurse to join the sodality and persevere in it, if every one else is allowed to share in the benefits of meetings? The answer is that none but the sodalists receive the spiritual privileges and indulgences of the sodality. None but they can be officers, either of the sodality itself, or of its sections or committees. Thus, membership is a very precious privilege and while those who attend meetings as outsiders receive some benefit, they lack the special advantages and encouragement which come from participation in the interior graces and privileges of a well organized and fervent sodality.

What has been said of meetings and entertainments is true also, to a certain extent, even of the sections of the sodality; and to these, likewise, Catholic nurses who are not sodalists may be admitted. This feature of sodality organization makes possible a great extension of the activities of the sections. Each section is established for a special purpose, and has its own officers and organization, dependent on the sodality and

under the standard of the Blessed Virgin, but with a particular purpose and aim. Hence, those who are not sodalists, but who are specially interested in the particular activities of the sections can take part in those activities, even though they do not join the sodality itself. They do not gain, however, the indulgences and privileges, nor the special share which sodalists enjoy in the prayers and good works of their fellow sodalists throughout the world.

COOPERATORS

Thus, to take an example, the Mission Section may include among its members any nurse who will take an active part in work for the missions. She may attend the meetings, share in the good works, obtain contributions, in brief, may take full part in the activities of the section. The officers of the section should always be sodalists, but the non-sodalist members, with this exception, may do as much as they like to help the work of the section.

Non-Catholics also may make contributions to the missions, sew and do other work for them, and thus aid the Mission Section; but, since the sodality is exclusively a Catholic society, non-Catholics cannot be members of the Mission Sec-

tion. They may be cooperators only, but the aid they can give in this way is quite unlimited, or rather is bounded only by their own good will.

The section for frequent Communion may similarly admit to membership, though not to the holding of offices, those Catholic nurses who are not sodalists. Where the crusade for frequent Communion is established, all the Catholic nurses in the hospital may thus be enrolled in it, whether they are sodalists or not. The sodality members will supply the officers for the sections, but any nurse who wishes may join as a member. This opens up great possibilities in the way of promoting frequent Communion, and the influence of the section may even extend beyond the hospital walls, while nurse after nurse may be induced to join it, through the zeal and persuasion of those who are already members.

The section for good reading is likewise specially qualified to receive into membership even those Catholic nurses who are not sodality members. In fact, the more it can enlist in the cause of circulating Catholic books and encouraging good reading of every kind, the better it will achieve its aim. While a fervent group of sodalists, in honor of the Blessed Mother, constantly oversees and urges on the work, members

may be recruited from among all who can be interested in spreading good reading. Especially is it useful to have a wider membership when it comes to soliciting new volumes for the nurses' libraries or collecting money for the purchase of books, pamphlets, and booklets to be circulated among the patients, nurses, or doctors. The more active members the better.

This section also should try to get as many outside cooperators, whether Catholic or not, as it is practicable to secure. There are so many angles to the work, and so much support is needed, especially of a financial kind, that cooperation ought to be organized wherever possible. Those who give practical help, but are not sodalists nor members of the section, may be given some such title as "Cooperators" to encourage them to continue their aid.

As regards the sewing section, whose purpose it is to sew for the poor, for the missions, for needy churches, etc., it is clear how beneficial might be the reception and the obtaining of cooperators and non-sodalist members. Nurses find little time to sit down and sew; and when at leisure, they do not always feel inclined to the effort. If they can interest some of their friends, even those who are not nurses, to become coopera-

tors in the work, the amount accomplished will be greatly increased, and the sodalists will, accordingly, feel encouraged and repaid for their efforts.

If the sodality adopts a mission hospital, and sends it supplies and clothing for its poor patients, the Sewing Section can cooperate effectively by enlisting outside help to increase the amount of its output. True, the nurses are not much in touch with possible helpers, but with the assistance of the sisters they can obtain aid. Sometimes a woman patient, who has become acquainted with the work of the section in the hospital, will be glad to assist after she has gone home and will be proud of the title of cooperator.

Convalescent patients in the hospital, looking about for something to occupy their hands usefully, may often be made interested in becoming cooperators and sewing for the missions or the poor. When the officers of the sections have grown used to their work, and accustomed to look for outside help, they will surprise themselves and others by the amount they can accomplish. Those who wish to cooperate and who cannot sew themselves, will sometimes be willing to give material or money to buy supplies for the work of the section.

The section for membership and sociability, which should constantly be on the alert to introduce Catholic nurses to the sodality and to interest them in qualifying for membership, may also take in outside members for the second purpose of its existence, to-wit: the supplying of entertainments and sociability to the sodalists and others. Cooperators will also be especially useful here in providing pleasant meetings. Those who have talent for music, dramatics, recitations, are not always members of the sodality. If Catholics, they may be admitted to the entertainment section, and if not Catholics, enlisted as cooperators.

As to the catechetical section, it should by all means invite every one who will come to its lectures and meetings. Every Catholic nurse should continually increase her own knowledge of the faith and her ability to teach it to others. Even non-Catholics will profit by attending these meetings and will learn something of the beauty and holiness of Catholic doctrine. The more who can be interested in catechetical study, whether sodalists or not, the better this section will fulfill its purpose.

Finally, even those who are not nurses, such as the internes, physicians, convalescent patients,

and others who frequent the hospital, should be made welcome so far as room will allow, unless some reason exists to the contrary. The greater good of the greater number is a noble end to strive for. A fervent, well-organized group of devoted sodalists must form the heart and soul of all sodality activities. But where, without harm to the main idea, others may be brought in and benefited through participation in sodality meetings and activities, it is in accord with the best spirit of the sodality to welcome them. For the sodalist works in honor of the Blessed Mother, not only for her own personal holiness, but with similar zeal and devotion for the sanctification of her neighbor and the spread and defense of the Church of Christ.

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